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By **Jason Zengerle**



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**“A FEROCIOUSLY FU  
ALMOST AS DISTUR  
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**- THE NEW YORK TIMES**

**“A DAFFILY DEVOUT BLACK COMEDY.  
JUST THE SORT OF JUICY LITTLE MORSEL  
THE HARD-BITTEN THEATREVORE HOPES TO FIND.”**

**- NEW YORK MAGAZINE**

**“IF *BOOK OF MORMON* AND  
*AVENUE Q* HAD A BABY,  
IT WOULD BE *HAND TO GOD*.”**

**- METRO**

**“YOU’LL REEL FROM SHOCK AND  
LAUGHTER.”**

**- NEW YORK POST**



# NNY DARK COMEDY!

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## Comments



1 *New York's* annual "Yesteryear" issue paid tribute to nighttime's rich past with a scrapbook of photos and stories covering 165 years of late-night mischief (**"After Midnight," March 23–April 5**). The theme seemed to resonate. "Brilliant stuff," tweeted mccarthyryanj. "A truly mesmerizing collection of words and images," added SamAHoward. The issue "is the nexus of the universe with Jay McInerney, Lee Quiñones, and Rosie Perez," tweeted maxlakin. In Jay McInerney's introduction, he mourned the present "commodified" state of the wee hours. Readers agreed. "Back when NYC was more than just a playground for finance bros," tweeted writer Scott Christian. But many still found a connection between the past and present city. **"Sex, drugs, parties, booze ... in NYC nightlife, some things never change,"** tweeted Stealingmnhtn. "A reminder of all the things to love in this strange, strange city," tweeted sonia\_roubini. "I could add so much and don't want this to end," added *Us Weekly's* fashion director, Sasha Charnin Morrison. Twitter user LadyMyler captured the general sentiment. "I can't quite express how much I love this," she said. "It prodded lovely and strange memories."

2 "Harvey knows one speed—'Balls to the wall,' he says. It's both his greatest asset and weakness," wrote Chris Smith in his profile of the Mets pitcher (**"Are the Mets Big Enough for Matt Harvey?," March 23–April 5**). NBC's Craig Calcaterra wondered if New York is ready for such a big personality. **"The story sets up the interesting and precarious position in which Matt Harvey finds himself as a personality, separate and apart from his identity as a ballplayer,"** he wrote on NBCSports.com. "However, baseball—and especially the New York baseball media—

has had 20 years of the quiet, businesslike Derek Jeter as its celebrity 'face' ... It also has, in ways it never did before Derek Jeter came around, decided that one is almost not allowed to be recognized as a superstar until one has won a championship ring or five. Throw Harvey into that mix, and you're bound to get criticism, thinkpieces, counter-thinkpieces and all manner of noise." ESPN's Johnette Howard agreed that Harvey's larger-than-life personality puts him in a tough situation. "If Harvey pitches well and wins, all of these things will be a blithe part of his legend," she wrote. "And if he doesn't? He'll be criticized for having too many distractions and too many run-ins with the Mets management." But, she adds, while it's **"possible to think of the Mets making the playoffs this season with Harvey, it's nearly impossible to see them doing it without him."** Commenters also worried that his personality would ultimately be his undoing. "Can't shake the feeling Harvey is a lot more interested in being a celebrity than a winner," wrote LTaylor4567. "Great talent and potential ... yes, potential," added stoneblu74. "Guy is 12-10 with a great ERA. But big ego and a bit distracted by the bright lights of Broadway." Still, many readers seem excited at the prospect of a Harvey reign. "Worth reading about the phenom, and phenomenon, that is about to hit New York (again)," tweeted zerizer. "Very ready for the Matt Harvey era," tweeted connorsimpson.

3 Lee Siegel's essay "Wrestling With Saul Bellow" (**March 23–April 5**) dived into his literary love affair with the Nobel laureate, whose reputation took a beating in the 1990s after bigoted comments he'd made surfaced, inspiring readers to reconsider the portrayals of women

and minorities in his books. The essay sparked a debate about whether a writer's moral character should taint the perception of his creative output. Commenter oldoldold suggested it shouldn't: "It seems unreasonable, even greedy, to insist that someone must be lovely and virtuous as well as staggeringly gifted." Commenter BasketWeaver also seemed willing to forgive Bellow for his offensive prose: "Leaving readers conflicted towards the material they've read is an extremely honorable characteristic for a writer to have." At least one reader disagreed with Siegel's characterization of the author. "It is simply not true that Bellow just turned cranky and right wing at the end of his life," wrote Dex\_Quire. **"He saw new generations coming up without any familiarity with literary culture or tradition, and it disturbed him. Was Bellow wrong to be disturbed?"** I just don't see the judgmental crankiness that Lee says drove him away from Bellow—he always had something interesting to say about what was going on, and his art was beautiful to the end." Zachary Leader, author of *The Life of Saul Bellow: To Fame and Fortune*, which Siegel discusses, wrote in to contest the assertion that his biography glossed over Bellow's darker side. "His most controversial remarks about and depictions of women occur in the second half of the life when he was outraged by the excesses of the 1960s and embroiled in a bitter and protracted divorce case with his third wife," Leader wrote. "Context is important in these instances, which is not to say it always or wholly excuses them. As Bellow himself admitted, he did not always behave admirably or honorably, a fact my biography makes no attempt to hide."

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INSIDE: Five generations of Bushes / Jens Risom at 99 / Elementary-school yogis / Leitch on baseball's new commissioner



## The Money: Annie Lowrey

Your Cell Phone Is  
a Dishwasher  
A non-brogrammer  
considers the new  
concierge economy.

ONE AFTERNOON A FEW WEEKS AGO, I realized I needed a handful of ingredients for dinner—some cilantro, another onion. There's a grocery store around the corner from my apartment. I could have gotten there and back in less than ten minutes. Instead, I stretched, made myself another cup of tea, and opened an app on my iPhone to let a personal shopper know what I needed. About 90 minutes later, the groceries appeared in my apartment. I never had to leave the sofa.

Just over a year ago, this would have been difficult. It was only last February that the grocery-delivery service Instacart launched in D.C., where I live. And it has only been in the past few years that dozens of other new app-based delivery and service-work suppliers have popped up. There's Drizly and Klink, which deliver booze. There's Washio, the proverbial "Uber for" laundry and dry cleaning. There's Homejoy for house cleaners; Swifto for dog walkers; Soothe for masseuses; TaskRabbit for pretty much everything else. There are now

even metaservices like WunWun and Magic that promise to figure out how to get you whatever you need, whenever you need it.

Acting as a middleman between cheap service workers and flush consumers is such a compelling business model that tech behemoths including Uber, Google, and Amazon are getting in on it. Amazon even offers, for those of us who are savvy in e-commerce but lacking a lawn mower, to find someone to bring in a herd of goats to eat your yard.

And yet the errand-outsourcing industry has also been polarizing. Optimists argue that these apps allow you to fob off life's annoyances on someone willing to treat them like a job. That means you can take that hour or three you spend on housework every day and collapse it down to nothing, freeing you to spend more time working or enjoying yourself, a change worth thousands and thousands of dollars, if you could put a price tag on it. Pessimists argue that these businesses merely make it easier for the well-off, lazy, or both to pay for someone else to do their dirty laundry for them—making the one percent's lifestyle affordable for, say, the 5 percent. Since when is that innovation? Or a real engine for economic growth?

To see for myself how well the new what-you-want-when-you-want-it industry really works, and what kind of future it might help usher in, I decided to undertake a little experiment. For two weeks, I did as little as humanly possible aside from read and write. I passed off anything that could be classified as an errand, housework, or chore. And it worked.

I mostly spend my days in my apartment, not in an office. My husband and I do not employ a cleaning service or a dog walker. I cannot function unless my living space is tidy. This being so, I do a not-inconsiderable amount of scrubbing, vacuuming, poop-collecting, trash-hauling, and repairing. But not anymore, at least for a brief spell. We needed food? I ordered it. Laundry? Washio. More toilet paper? Any of a half-dozen delivery apps. Get that weird detritus out of the parking spot? Sure. I got a squat rack and 300 pounds of weights set up on the cheap. All the while, I sat on my sofa like a duchess, digitally barking orders at my workers while my personal productivity soared.

It wasn't just normal chores I managed to get done, either. One afternoon, my husband called me from the airport, frantic at having forgotten his MacBook charger on the way to a business meeting in Sacramento. Could he stop at an Apple store in Sacramento? No, he'd get in too late. I turned to Magic, one of those metaservices.

"Magic," I texted. "Can someone in Sacramento deliver a computer charger for a 2014 MacBook Air to a hotel?" It took four text messages, perhaps three minutes of active thought, and about \$100 in fees for the charger to show up, like magic. Very expensive magic.

But magic is never really magic, is it? No, it is just work. That's the thing about these apps: They allow you to outsource the work you would normally do for yourself by reducing the friction associated with hiring workers for one-off tasks and pushing down the costs of hiring someone on a consistent basis. A year or two ago, after all, I could have put up a Craigslist ad looking for someone to get me groceries, but I would have had to wade through the responses and manage payment and delivery. I could have ordered them from a service like Peapod or FreshDi-

rect, but it would have taken a day or two. These apps allow us to assign a value to chores that the non-filthy-rich rarely, if ever, outsource.

That brings us back to the pessimists' argument about these businesses. Yes, they're creating a tremendous number of jobs, turning much of the conventional wisdom about robots destroying the labor market on its head. Uber alone has signed up 160,000 drivers in just the past few years. But many of them are not really increasing the size of the economy as much as they are shuffling work around from one person to another whose time is worth less on the free market. "You're not creating economic activity, in my mind, when you have someone do your laundry instead of doing it yourself," said Erik Brynjolfsson of MIT (who actually counts himself an errand-app supporter). "It's a question of paid work versus unpaid work." It was Nobel laureate Paul Samuelson who noted that a man who marries his maid reduces GDP.

And they're ginning up that cheap GDP courtesy of some crummy trends in the labor market. Part of the reason these apps are flourishing is that they pay relatively low wages to workers, and, in the long wake of the recession, there are many workers still available to do this kind of work. You could even argue that these apps might be a divisive force in the economy—you can imagine them helping to foster a world composed of comfortable Annies paying to get their trash taken out and low-wage, low-mobility worker bees doing their housework for them, sapping mom-and-pop brick-and-mortar businesses all the while.

But that is not to say that the optimists' argument is total bunk. Even with all the gadgets and technical innovations in the modern home, despite being citizens of the richest nation in the history of the planet, the average American man spends 81 minutes a day cleaning up his castle. For the average woman, it is 133 minutes. During my two-week experiment? It withered to nothing. My days felt longer. My work felt easier. My life felt simpler and more enjoyable.

Perhaps that sounds like nothing more than instant gratification. Perhaps, as another common criticism goes, all these apps are just a way for entitled 24-year-old Silicon Valley men to iron out the handful of hassles they think that they have. But those kinds of moralistic arguments have always struck me as condescending and hollow. For a parent with a sick toddler to be able to get diapers and baby food delivered in an hour for a few bucks? That is a triumph of capitalism, not something to sneer at.

And even if tech's men-children are the ones dreaming up these apps, my suspicion is that women have a lot to gain from them—or at least the privileged women with enough disposable income to use them. Innovations like the dishwasher and the washing machine helped women enter the workforce. They let women spend more time on work once they were there. They helped to raise our wages. They helped to improve workers' productivity. As such, they helped the entire country flourish. These apps are not reducing the overall need for housework, like the dishwasher did. But for a host of reasons, voluntary and not, the burden of chores still falls overwhelmingly on women of all income levels. And so convenience and those saved 133 minutes are surely worth something to us—and it only cost about \$10 for grocery delivery, I learned. ■

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#### Washio

SERVICE:  
On-demand  
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and laundry

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SERVICE:  
Housekeeping

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apartment

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At-home  
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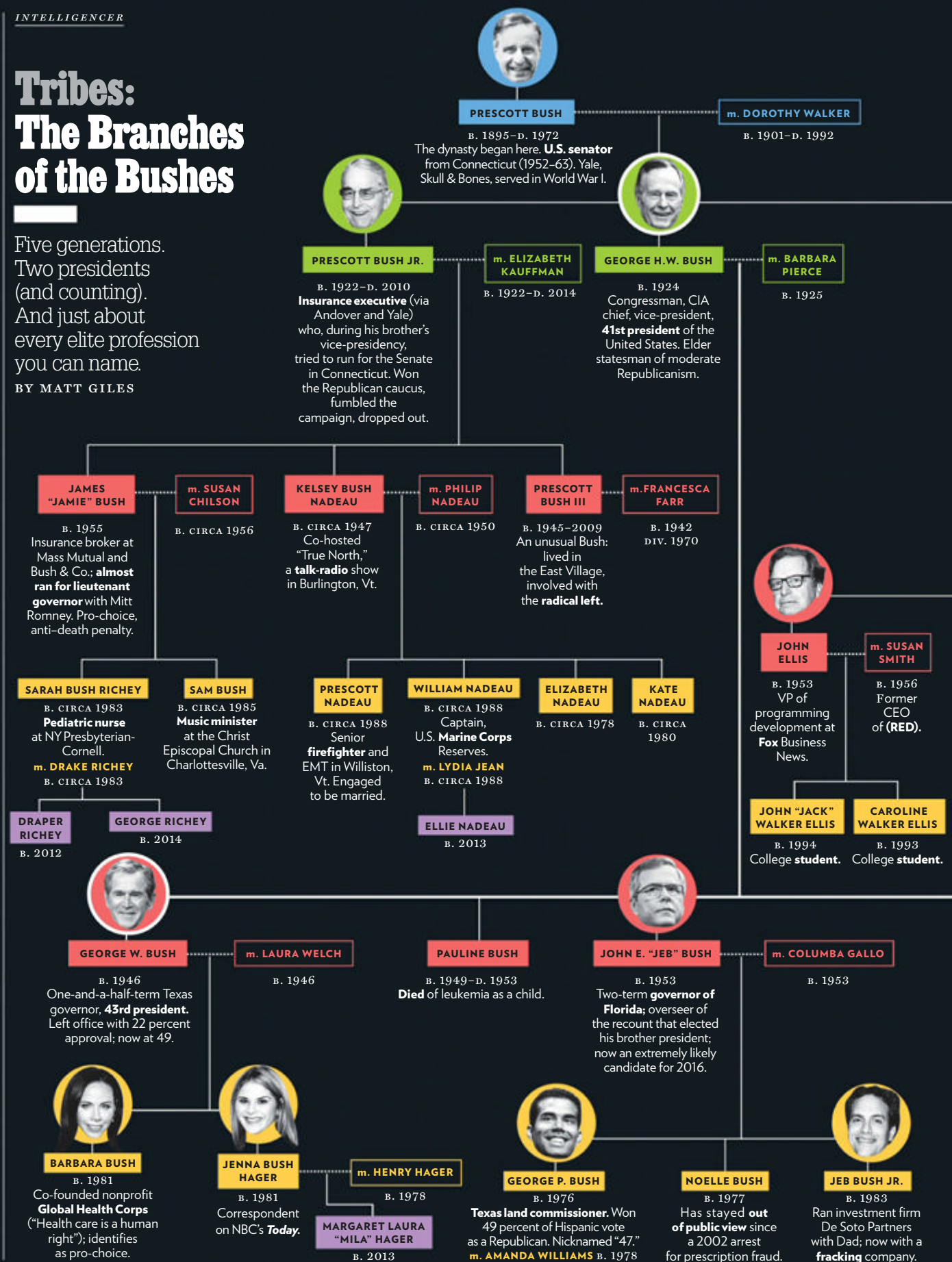


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# Tribes: The Branches of the Bushes

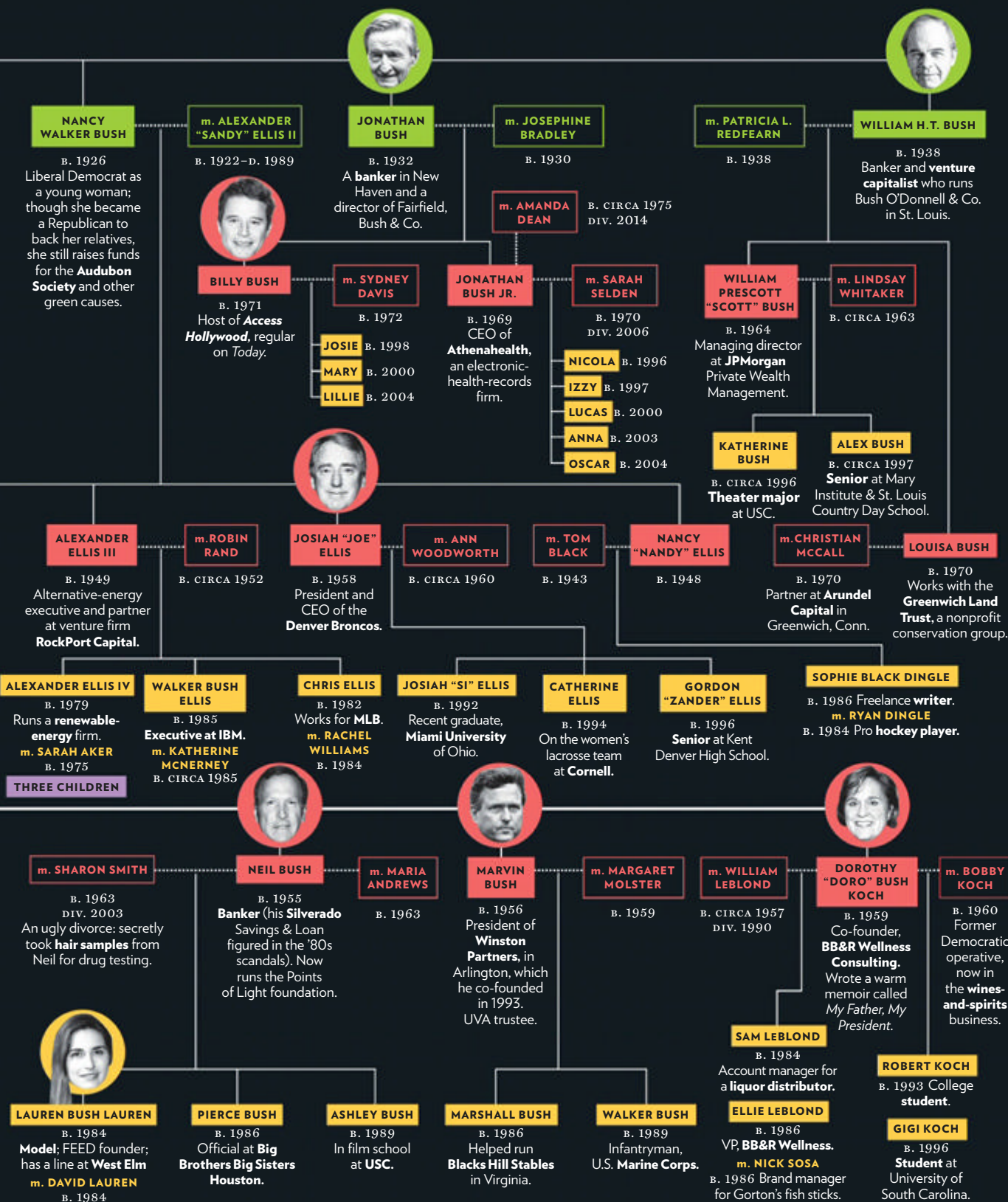
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BORN 1945-1971FOURTH GENERATION  
BORN 1976-2004FIFTH GENERATION  
BORN AFTER 2006



162 MINUTES WITH ...

## Jens Risom

Seventy-five years ago, he introduced Danish Modern design to America. Why should he stop now?

BY CHRISTOPHER BONANOS

**A**RE YOU NATURALLY gray, or ...?" Jens Risom teases me when we meet. I've just shown up at his home in New Canaan, and he's kidding rather than insulting, because his own hair is pure white. He lives with his wife, Henny, in a two-bedroom apartment at a retirement center called the Inn. His son Sven and daughter Peg are visiting today. The complex is pretty nice—airy, bright, spotless—but

it has busy hotel carpet in the hallways, and the common spaces are full of the speckled beige-pink-mauve that seems to exist only in the institutional world.

That is, until you cross the threshold of apartment No. 201, into the best furniture showroom in New York, circa 1959. Against one wall stand a low credenza and a pair of end tables, with a neo-Cubist bronze sculpture at one side. A neat little desk has a bright-red work surface that seems to float about





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an inch above the base. They offer me a seat, and it's a swoopy Arne Jacobsen swivel chair. This is a bougie loft ideal of old age, where, even late in life, nobody has to submit to the indignities of taupe vinyl.

Risom sits in a rocker in the corner, next to the bronze. If you own a piece of Danish Modern furniture—or your parents or grandparents do, because it was the dominant contemporary style of the '50s and '60s—there's a good chance that the tag underneath reads JENS RISOM DESIGN. It's not going too far to say that Risom is the person most responsible for bringing Scandinavian design to this country, remaking the look of the American home forever. His first produced work was in the mid-1930s, and his most recent—it was for Design Within Reach in 2009 and called the Risom Rocker—is the chair he's sitting in right now. Lately, he's collaborated with a young colleague, Chris Hardy, on a new line of cabinets called the Ven Storage Collection. DWR is planning to introduce it around May 8. On that day, Risom will turn 99.

He came to America from Denmark in 1939, not quite 23 years old. I ask him what he saw, upon arriving here, in the way of the contemporary design he'd studied in Copenhagen, and he matter-of-factly says, "There was very little." He found a job with Dan Cooper, on East 62nd Street—"an interior decorator of little value," he recalls, "and I wouldn't say he was a brilliant designer. But there was a showroom that would sell furniture and fabrics, and there were a few pieces, and they were not very exciting. So I told him that I would like to make a few drawings and see whether he would like to make them." He did; they did. The East 60s then were full of cabinetmaking shops, and the pieces were constructed and sold right in the neighborhood. "Architects were interested," he says, "because there was nothing for them to buy." What does he think of them today? "For that time, I think they were good." And they are recognizably from the same hand as his later work: "They were what you'd call a Risom design."

I tap on a small table next to his chair, admiring it. "That's about, oh, 1940s," he says. "Three legs." Or really two: One side is supported by a slab that pokes through the top, through a tidy little slot where you can slide a magazine. Later on, I look it up, thinking that I might like to own one, and find that originals are going for three grand.

His breakthrough was meeting Hans Knoll, founder of the company that bore (and bears) his name, and with Knoll as salesman and Risom as creator, they began to build a line and then put on a traveling Euro-furniture road show with their wives. "Knoll had a car, and I didn't," Risom recalls,

"and we drove around the country to any architect who had shown any interest in our furniture in New York, and stopped wherever there were people who'd liked our things. I don't think we had a catalogue or anything—this was very primitive. We had drawings of things we had done." Did potential buyers find contemporary design alien or strange? "No—they liked it! They just didn't have any way of buying it." Knoll and Risom soon changed that.

The furniture Risom made didn't have the steeliness of Mies van der Rohe's, or, later on, the spaciness of Jacobsen's or Eero Saarinen's. His was an approachable, livable kind of mod. He worked mostly in wood—in the earliest days, he says, simply "because it was available." For his first line with Knoll, in 1942, he designed a chair with curvy side



*Army-reject webbing for Knoll (1942).*

frames (at first cut from softwood, because better stuff was all going to the war effort) and was casting about for a seat material. He settled on cotton straps of the type used in parachute packs, because he'd found that, of the miles of webbing the Army was buying, a great deal was being rejected because it couldn't pass strength tests. It was, however, more than strong enough to make a springy, comfortable seat. The chair that resulted—you can still buy it from Knoll today, Model 654—is one of those designs that don't date; it continues to be fresh without seeming strange. In fact, that's a particular quality of Risom's work. It looked sharp in a spanking-new interior, but you could also drop it into a traditional room and it would blend. Lyndon Johnson had a Risom swivel chair in the Oval Office, and it fit in just fine among the museum pieces. "Good furniture," Risom says when I ask about mixing and matching, "is good with good furniture."

Risom today is sturdy in some ways, fading in others. After talking for a while, we head down the hall to lunch, and he's robust, trundling along nicely with a cane, holding the room with that great snowy hair; he charms table-hoppers, flirts a bit with a neighbor, adopts the role of host, makes sure the food is to my liking. Macular degeneration is creeping up on him, though, and his hearing, too, is not what it was. Most annoying to him is that his eyesight now keeps him from sketching—"Once I was a mad drawing-maker, but I don't do anything anymore." (When I ask whether he ever tried working on a computer, he responds, "Are we making a joke?") For the new Ven line at DWR, Chris Hardy—who is literally young enough to be his great-grandson—did the heavy work of designing and rendering; Risom's role has been to inspire, critique, and occasionally browbeat. At a recent review of prototypes, Sven tells me, his father needed a few minutes to get himself oriented, but once he did, he immediately started picking the details apart, saying, "These edges are terrible—this is all wrong!" and explaining why. (The edges got fixed.)

Talking with Risom, you quickly grasp that he was always a practical and forthright Dane, good at the business of design as well as the art of it. Ask him about designers he admired when he was young, and his emphasis is on furniture "that can be made"—manufactured, in quantity, without undue complication. When Frank Lloyd Wright met him, Wright preeningly asked what Risom thought of his furniture, which is legendarily attractive and legendarily uncomfortable; Risom responded, "Not much." A few years ago, Risom's daughter tells me, he was in the hospital for a bit and, soon after arriving, called his son-in-law, a doctor, and said, "I can't stand this—can you talk to someone?" It was not a medical problem but an aesthetic one. "Well, I've never got that one before," an administrator responded, "but if he really does want to move the furniture in his hospital room ..."

Most of Risom's post-Knoll work was with the two firms he founded: Jens Risom Design, which he sold in 1970, and then another called Design Control. Richard Avedon shot his elegant and spare-looking advertising, which carried the slogan *THE ANSWER IS RISOM*. That was especially true in New Canaan, where not only Risom but Philip Johnson and a clutch of design professionals settled in the 1940s and '50s, making it the most design-forward suburb in America. Johnson's Glass House complex, now a museum, is a short drive from the Inn, and Risom sits on its board. There's a plan for a birthday bash on the grounds next year. ■



APRIL 16-26

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# Youth: Yoga at P.S. 205

Child's pose, in class.

THIS SCHOOL in Bayside, Queens, is just one of many in town—private and public, affluent and less so—where students can sign up for an afternoon yoga class. (The instructors at P.S. 205 come from a studio called Little Flower Yoga.) We asked students, from first grade through fourth, to strike their poses of choice. REPORTED BY S. JHOANNA ROBLED0



**UPAVISTHA KONASANA B**  
(Wide-Seated Forward Bend)  
*Salvatore Yan Farina, Grade 1*



**VASISTHASANA** (Side Plank)  
*Grace Hughes, Grade 4*



**ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA**  
(Downward-Facing Dog)  
*Mia Colman, Grade 3*



**SARVANGASANA** (Shoulder Stand)  
*Keilan Moran, Grade 4*



**ASSISTED BALASANA** (Child's Pose)  
*David Jakubiec and James Fourman, Grade 3*



**BHUJANGASANA** (Cobra)  
*Annabelle LaRosa, Grade 1*



**VIRABHADRASANA III** (Warrior)  
*Jordan Ocampo, Grade 4*



**USTRASANA** (Camel)  
*Amarah Alaniz, Grade 4*





**URDHVA DHANURASANA**  
(Three-Legged Wheel)  
*Ava LeRea, Grade 1*



**VRKSASANA** (Tree)  
*Spencer Louie, Grade 4*



**NAVASANA** (Partner Boat)  
*Samantha Shoule and Joshua Lee, Grade 1*



**TITTIBHASANA** (Firefly)  
*Kimberly Deng, Grade 4*



**VIRABHADRASANA II** (Warrior)  
*Nate Gross, Grade 4*



**DHANURASANA** (Bow)  
*Gabriella Saareste, Grade 4*



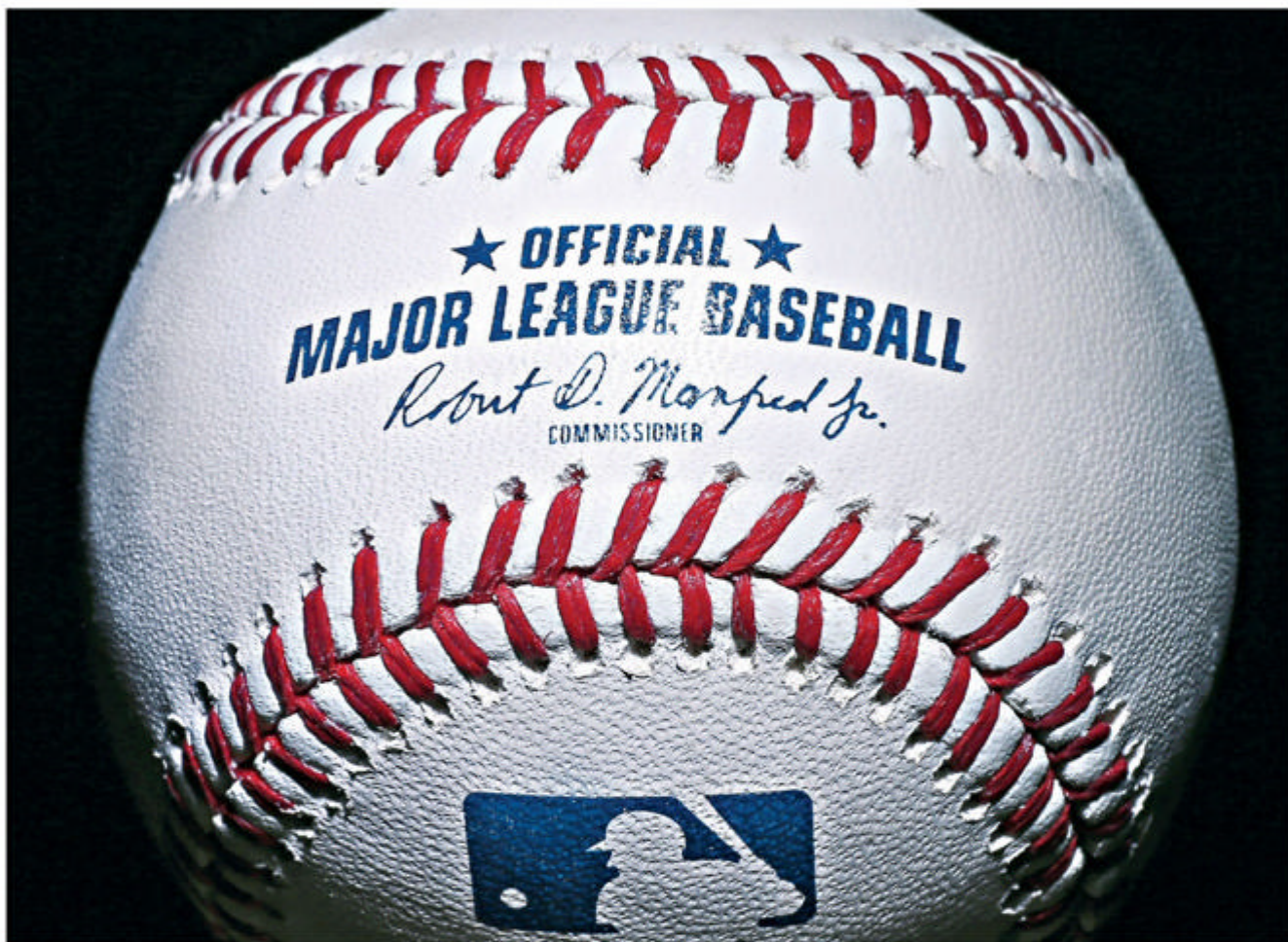
**TRI PADA ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA**  
(Three-Legged Downward-Facing Dog)  
*Layla Concepcion, Grade 4*



**VIRASANA** (Hero)  
*Gabriella Cohn, Grade 1*



**PARIVRTTA JANU SIRSASANA**  
(Revolved Head-to-Knee)  
*Elsa Kolenovic, Grade 4*



## Games: Will Leitch

The Clock Starts Now  
How much change  
can a new commissioner  
bring to baseball?

ON THE FIRST DAY of his new job as commissioner of Major League Baseball—literally hours after he took over from Bud Selig, the man who had held the post for 23 years—Rob Manfred started freaking people out. The source of the discord was an interview he gave to ESPN in which he said he would be “open” to eliminating defensive shifts, the innovative strategy teams have deployed in recent years. (Essentially, moving everyone to the right or left side of the infield against a pull hitter, that sort of thing.)

ESPN analyst Dan Szymborski called the idea of banning shifts “monumentally stupid.” Baseball Prospectus co-founder Joe Sheehan sniffed that Manfred was “misdiagnosing problems 12 hours in.” I myself was wondering how such a ban would even work: Would the players all wear shock collars that would zap them if they moved too far away from their assigned positions? It felt like a strangely tone-deaf thing for a new commissioner to



say on day one, particularly when he'd taken over for Selig, a man so retrograde and old school that he boasted about not even having an email account. Baseball is going through a defensive revolution, with new intelligence and research changing the game, and the new guy, the one who was supposed to be younger and more in touch with current culture and *The Way the Game Is Played Now*, wants to ban the most significant on-field innovation of the last decade? The paint wasn't dry on the front door of his office, and the baseball world was already furious.

What was most fascinating was what happened next: Manfred dropped it and then ... totally moved on. He discussed the possibility of Pete Rose's ban being lifted, and then it was off to the pace of the game, MLB's corporate structure, shortening the season by eight games, a truly international draft, a return to Montreal, and day games in the World Series. The first weeks of Manfred's reign were a blizzard of barroom hypotheticals about the very structure of the game, an open discussion of remodeling it from the bottom up. Manfred is about to begin only his first season with his name printed on all the baseballs; if he lasts half as long as Selig did, he'll be the commissioner of baseball until 2027. So what's that going to look like?

THIS YEAR, AT LEAST, it's going to look like an especially fascinating season. By adding Max Scherzer to an already dominant rotation, the Washington Nationals have geared themselves up to be a potential 100-win team, which might not mean a whit come the postseason (as it didn't last year, when the Nats were one of the best teams in baseball). One of the biggest contracts of all time was just signed by ... the Miami Marlins? That means that the first truly fearsome power hitter of the post-steroid era, Giancarlo Stanton, will be playing for a quasi-minor-league franchise for the next dozen years. The most exciting young team in baseball might be the Chicago Cubs, the one franchise for whom a World Series would actually knock the NFL out of the headlines. Alex Rodriguez is back, probably to more cheers than you suspect. Heck, even the Mets might be sorta good this year.

But the next decade or so probably will have more to do with the new commissioner than whoever is running the Mets' or Yankees' front office. Manfred came by the job like all sports commissioners come by their jobs these days: by working his way up through the system for decades—a former labor lawyer, Manfred has worked

within MLB for 17 years, recently as the head of the Biogenesis investigation and Selig's right-hand man. The days when a commish was hired simply because he was wise and loved the sport are long gone; it's a CEO position now.

To hear it from the outside, Manfred is entering a thankless job, particularly in today's current NFL-and-television-ratings-obsessed environment. The general perception is that baseball is fading, an old man's game ignored by kids today, with their faces in their phones and their hands in their pants. But one could argue that MLB commissioner is the easiest job in sports right now. Teams are minting money, not just from television contracts but also from unprecedented revenue from within the league itself, thanks in large part to the MLB Advanced Media arm, which has had such success streaming live video for non-MLB events (like the NCAA tournament, the Watch ESPN app, the WWE network, and HBO's latest venture) that it is likely to be spun off as its own, pure-technology company. More people globally—and here in the United States, especially Latinos—are watching baseball than at any other time in history.

But for all the sentimental nostalgia for an unchanging sport, baseball is always in need of tinkering. Even Selig, who is essentially a conservative, made some profound, radical changes in the game: wild cards, interleague play, expanded playoffs, a shockingly high percentage of teams with new stadiums. (Some even think the balls were juiced—and some scientific studies actually suggest they were!)

Manfred, his successor, has already proposed a change to baseball that would have been inconceivable as recently as a year ago: He's considering putting in a pitch clock. It would be a major depart-

ture, to say the least; baseball is a sport that long prided itself on having no such monstrosity near its diamonds. Clocks are for philistines. Baseball is an eternal sport: Baseball can go on forever.

Which is, you know, sort of a reason to put in a clock. But it's in the implementation of that clock that we can see what a Manfred Doctrine might look like in the years going forward. Purists, when talk of a clock came up, drew dire pictures of a monstrous *Rock n Jock* baseball wasteland, with flashing neon digits lighting up and a booming, Vader-like voice counting down the seconds until a pitcher, with no time to think, sprinted to the mound and flung the ball wherever. But the clock turned out to be as minor and modest an addition as possible: If you aren't specifically looking for it, you'll never even notice it. And it's probably going to work, shortening games by at least five minutes.

The clock is probably just the beginning. Save for a minor protest from a few owners when he was elected—widely seen as White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf's being petulant for the sake of petulance—Manfred has the owners unified in a fashion similar to Selig. This should allow him to get to work on some of baseball's other lingering problems, most notably its decreasing influence among millennials. Manfred focused on this on his first day, too, telling the *Times*' Tyler Kepner that “you can enhance and provide real fans with information via technology that makes the game move faster and keeps people engaged during the game, without distracting from what's the core, what's out there on the field.” Manfred means using baseball's supposed disadvantage—downtime—to its advantage, or, to put it bluntly, this is the sport where you're least likely to miss something if you're looking at your phone. MLB has expanded its use of instant replay and its fielding technology called Statcast, which allows fans (and general managers evaluating talent) to understand precisely what's happening on the field in a way they haven't before. MLB has also ramped up wireless in stadiums for this very purpose; nothing turns millennials—or, increasingly, baby-boomers—away faster than telling them their phones won't work for three hours.

How's this different from Selig? It's an admission that the game needs to be more nimble, lighter on its feet. For years, making a change in baseball has felt like turning an ocean liner around: Selig made a ton of changes, but only because he was in office so long. Manfred is already working to make the game more dynamic ... and, perhaps, a little less self-serious. ■

**This is the sport  
where you're  
least likely to miss  
something  
while looking at  
your phone.**

# A Dumb Job

How is it possible that the inane institution of **the anchorman** has endured for more than 60 years?

SOME TWO MONTHS into Brian Williams's six-month banishment from NBC for making stuff up, it's not known whether he will ever return to the anchor chair at *Nightly News*. It's also not known whether anyone cares. The understudy who stepped in, Lester Holt, is leading in evening-news viewership as Williams did. No one is complaining that Holt's résumé

includes three years co-hosting the Westminster Dog Show but lacks those narrow Indiana Jones escapes from danger, whether in Iraq or New Orleans, that his predecessor conjured up to prove his gravitas. No one is fretting about whether Holt sullied the dignity of an anchor's higher calling when he did a cameo on *30 Rock*. No one seems to notice that Holt is continuing as anchor at NBC's *Dateline*, the trashy newsmagazine whose signature feature is "To Catch a Predator." ¶ The interchangeable blandness of the two *Nightly News* anchors and the continuity of their

Walter  
Cronkite,  
1974







[1.]

## ARE WE LOOKING AT A POST-ANCHOR FUTURE?

ANDREW HEYWARD, PRESIDENT OF CBS NEWS  
FROM 1996 TO 2005, ON WHAT  
WILL BECOME OF THE EVENING NEWS.

viewership confirm the reality that lurked just beneath the moral outrage, torrential social-media ridicule, and Comcast executive-suite chaos of the Williams implosion: For all the histrionics, this incident of media blood sport was much ado about not so much. The network-news anchor as an omnipotent national authority figure is such a hollow anachronism in 21st-century America that almost nothing was at stake. NBC's train wreck played out as corporate and celebrity farce rather than as a human or cultural tragedy because it doesn't actually matter who puts on the bespoke suit and reads the news from behind a desk.

Yet the institution of the network anchor persists even as such perennial eulogies are written for it, even as the broadcast networks give way to the individualized narrowcasting of social networks. As Andrew Heyward, the former president of CBS News, describes the atavistic absurdity of the franchise, the very concept that an anchor could "organize the world in a coherent way," putting the world "literally" in a box for half an hour, is now a non sequitur. But like the cockroach, the anchorman has outlasted countless changes in the ecosystem around him. And he has done so despite being a ridiculous, if ingenious, American invention since his birth.

The network anchor's roots are not in journalism but in the native cultural tradition apotheosized by L. Frank Baum. Like the Wizard of Oz (as executive-produced by Professor Marvel), anchors have often been fronts for those pulling the strings behind the curtain: governments and sponsors, not to mention those who actually do the work of reporting the news. With their larger-than-life heads looming into our living rooms, the anchors have been brilliant at selling the conceit that a resonant voice, an avuncular temperament, a glitzy, throne-like set, and the illusion of omniscience could augment the audience's brains, hearts, and "courage" (at one point, a Dan Rather sign-off) as it tries to navigate a treacherous world. Just don't look behind the curtain. Many of the charges leveled against Williams for conduct unbecoming an anchorman could be made against his predecessors too.

**THE STRAIN OF ALL-AMERICAN** humbug baked into television anchoring from the start has often been obscured by the industry's penchant for self-mythologizing. Even the provenance of the term *anchorman* itself has been retouched for public consumption. For years it was said to have first gained currency in 1952, when it turned up in a CBS press release to characterize Walter Cronkite's role in the network's coverage

**How might TV news have turned out differently if the networks didn't reward anchors more than the people who report and produce the stories?** Let's pretend for a

second that the industry had evolved a different way. And let's just say that reading the news was considered the entry-level position. That if you could read the prompter, so what? That's how you started, but the real glory lay in finding original stories and reporting them in a compelling way from all over the world, or all over town if you were in a local station. If that were the incentive across the board, we'd be in much better shape.

By the way, there is a program like that, it's called *60 Minutes*; it only happens to be the most successful news program ever invented. So this isn't so crazy.

**Yet *60 Minutes*, without a single anchor, is an outlier, while each network has its own anchor-hosted news program. If the anchor format is not as successful, how did it get to be the dominant one?** The short answer to your question is, it worked.

News is sold on 25-to-54 year olds, and there's still enough strength in that demographic that there's plenty of profit being made, and that's why there hasn't been that much innovation. It's still, to a degree, working. On the anchor side, if you were told, "You know what, we love your reporting so much you no longer have to get up at five in the morning, wait outside the courthouse on a winter's day for the verdict to come in—you can stay in the studio, you can write your own copy if you're in a small market or have it written for you if you're in a big one, and we'll pay you three to five to ten times as much," what

insane person is going to say no to that?

Now, a new generation of viewers is coming of age that, for the first time in the history of television news, is not going to emulate or step into the news habits of its parents. My kids don't ever plan to watch a network newscast. For any reason. What's been erosion is going to become a cliff.

**Do you foresee a day when the networks abandon the anchor model?** The network evening

newscasts, as maligned as they are, are still bastions of serious reporting on important issues compared to most television news.

The history of innovation in American media is that the new formats don't tend to supplant the old ones; they tend to eventually coexist. We still have radio. In this case, I think you're going to see an evolution that doesn't mean that the network anchor will disappear, but I do think the story and the reporter will become more important. If you look at what's happened in print, the unit of value increasingly is the article as opposed to the newspaper. Because, chances are, the article has been shared via social media to people who don't necessarily go to the home page of the paper, let alone buy it at a newsstand. The same thing is going to happen increasingly in TV.

What is going to come back, in my view, is the importance of sector expertise, on-scene reporting, and enterprise journalism. I saw a poster in Times Square the other day for the new season of HBO's *Vice* magazine show. You know what the tagline is? "We go there." It's a sad day when a newsmagazine can use "we go there" as a distinctive selling point.

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[2.]

# I'M USEFUL, I SWEAR!

ANCHORS THROUGH THE AGES WRESTLE WITH THE PURPOSE, AND PRACTICE, OF THEIR OWN JOBS.



“It’s a little like being a clergyman ... Most of the week you conduct standard religious services, but the importance is when something goes wrong. Right now somebody could come to that door and say, ‘A candidate has been shot, go on the air.’ I’d walk in, draw on a lot of experience in this field, and ad-lib for five hours.”

**John Chancellor**, *NBC Nightly News* anchor, 1970–82

“The one thing I hope, and I believe, is that even my enemies think that I am authentic. In my heart, my marrow, I am a reporter. And one who doesn’t play it safe.”

**Dan Rather**, *CBS Evening News* anchor, 1981–2005

“People say I’m too aloof ... in some ways, that’s a compliment. It is not my emotions that matter on a story. It is the emotions of the people we’re covering. Edward R. Murrow used to go up on the rooftops of London. Do you think his aim was to let Americans know how he was feeling? His aim was to let the American people know how the people of London survived.”

**Peter Jennings**, *ABC World News Tonight* anchor, 1983–2005

“The audience is more sophisticated than we give them credit for—they don’t want a mechanical Ted Baxter ... I’m a serious, caring, compassionate person. I hope that comes out.”

**Katie Couric**, *CBS Evening News* anchor, 2006–11



“I am a 43-year-old anachronism ... I am the kid in front of the TV set wondering what it was like to anchor the evening news.”

**Brian Williams**, *NBC Nightly News* anchor since 2004, currently suspended

“I hope people know that when I’m sitting there, it’s not some guy on a desk on a platform with sort of this voice-of-God approach.”

**David Muir**, *ABC World News Tonight* anchor since 2014

“The anchoring ... is the least important part of my day.”

**Scott Pelley**, *CBS Evening News* anchor since 2011



“I think ... that it would be absolutely splendid if you got rid of the anchorperson entirely and found some other way ... to do the broadcast.”

**Walter Cronkite**, *CBS Evening News* anchor, 1962–81, said in the penultimate year of his time behind the desk



of the political conventions. Also for years, Don Hewitt, the CBS News producer who ran the newscast, and Sig Mickelson, the first CBS News president, engaged in a friendly back-and-forth as to which of them deserved credit. (Cronkite attributed the term to a third CBS News executive, Paul Levitan.) But in 2009, Mike Conway, an Indiana University journalism professor, unearthed the far more humble origins of “anchor man.” It turns out that the term’s first use on television was in 1948 at NBC to describe the permanent member of a rotating panel of celebrities on a quiz show titled *Who Said That?*

This footnote would seem to have no bearing on the subsequent history of television news except for the fact that *Who Said That?* pioneered the networks’ blurring of news and entertainment. The show was the brainchild of the producer Fred Friendly, who would soon be revered for his partnership with the patron saint of broadcast journalism, Edward R. Murrow, at CBS, where among other feats they would famously excoriate Joe McCarthy in their prime-time show, *See It Now*, in 1954. Friendly’s autobiography glides by *Who Said That?*, Conway noted, because “he wanted to be known for working with Murrow” rather than vulgar forays into infotainment. But the proto-anchorman of *Who Said That?*, John Cameron Swayze, didn’t share Friendly’s highfalutin sensitivities. Even as he appeared on the NBC quiz show, he was the newscaster (not yet called an “anchor”) at NBC’s evening news—*The Camel News Caravan*, the progenitor of *Nightly News*. Swayze’s double duty of more than 60 years ago is the template for Williams’s juggling of his *Nightly* chores with slow-jamming the news with Jimmy Fallon.

Swayze, who was selected for the nightly *Camel News* by its sponsor, the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, and obediently kept a lit cigarette in an ashtray on-camera, was billed as “the nightly monarch of the air.” Anticipating Cronkite’s “And that’s the way it is,” he deployed catchphrases to both kick off his 15-minute show (“Let’s hopscotch the world for headlines!”) and sign off (“Well, that’s the story, folks! This is John Cameron Swayze, and I’m glad we could get together”). He was admired for wearing a carnation and changing his tie every night. Such was his fame that Milton Bradley, the manufacturer of Candy Land, created the board game Swayze to capitalize on his celebrity as a newsmen. Swayze was certainly a step up in stature from his predecessor at NBC, Paul Alley, who edited and narrated a nightly *NBC Television Newsreel* in a hole-in-the-wall studio at 45th Street and Ninth Avenue during the television net-



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work's experimental postwar, pre-anchor period. Alley was most famous for the size of his expense account and his habit of showing visitors nude photos of his wife.

But Swayze was no more of a newsman than Alley. Thanks to Jeff Kisseloff's invaluable oral history of television's early years, *The Box*—based on interviews conducted more than two decades ago, when many eyewitnesses were still around—we know that Swayze did not put great store in boning up on breaking events. “He wouldn’t even see the film before the show,” recalled Arthur Lodge, the first news writer hired for *The Camel News Caravan*. “He was more concerned about whether his toupee was on straight. How can you be involved with the first news program and not give a shit about what goes out over the air?”

Quite easily, as it happened. Swayze remained the NBC News anchor for seven years. And, in tandem with his rival at CBS, Douglas Edwards, he codified the role. Up until then, everything had been up for grabs in television news. Early on, the hope was “to avoid having the newscaster’s face on TV,” recalled Rudy Bretz, the first employee hired by the CBS television department. “We figured that the commentator was secondary to the news itself.” Once that lofty theory was discarded, no one knew whether the man presiding onscreen (women were never considered) should be “a man of authority” or “a working journalist,” Chester Burger, an early CBS News hand, told Kisseloff. The obvious candidates—“Murrow’s Boys,” the CBS radio-news stars who came to fame in their coverage of World War II in Europe—saw television as beneath them, or “mindless,” as Murrow put it. So CBS experimented. “We tried charming young people. We tried handsome people. We tried an old man with a beard for authority at a time when people didn’t wear beards,” Henry Cassirer, the head of CBS Television News from 1945 to 1948, recalled. “We didn’t want a brilliant man” but rather someone “likable and steady”—a visitor who would be welcome in the living rooms where early adopters were tending to put their television sets. At CBS, there were at least 12 anchors between 1944 and 1948, including a New York *Daily News* sportswriter, before Edwards took root. (There would be only four CBS News anchors over the next 57 years.) At NBC, Swayze was prized for the photographic memory that at the time obviated the need for him to read from a script. In that era, before the invention of the teleprompter, this skill was invaluable in simulating the aura of Oz-like omniscience.

Once Swayze was replaced by the nightly-news team of Chet Huntley and David

Brinkley in 1956, he became a pitchman for Timex watches. He ultimately was remembered more for Timex’s slogan—“It takes a licking and keeps on ticking”—than for his years as the “monarch” of news. But Swayze had helped establish an industry paradigm. John Charles Daly, who was not only the ABC News evening anchor from 1953 to 1960 but also the network’s vice-president for news, doubled as the emcee of *What’s My Line?*, a campy, celebrity-driven Sunday-night game show on CBS, during his entire ABC tenure. (In one season he took on Swayze’s old role of anchoring *Who Said That?* at NBC, too—a trifecta of network-news-and-entertainment cross-wiring.) At CBS, Murrow and Friendly traded off the high-toned *See It Now* with *Person to Person*, the higher-rated celebrity-interview show where Murrow went one-on-one with Zsa Zsa Gabor, Liberace, and Yogi Berra. Cronkite’s anchor role at the 1952 political conventions notwithstanding, he, too, was

**Like the Wizard of Oz, anchors have often been fronts for those pulling the strings behind the curtain.**

soon doubling as an entertainer on the *CBS Morning Show*, the network’s *Today* clone, where he was partnered with the puppet Charlemagne the Lion.

Cronkite ascended to the anchor chair of the *CBS Evening News* in 1962, succeeding Edwards. By the time he retired prematurely to make way for Rather in 1981, the identity of the network anchor as the voice-of-God arbiter of American civic virtue had been indelibly fixed in his image. Not without reason. He was a first-class reporter and an enforcer of standards, and, much to his credit, he didn’t take himself as seriously as his idolaters did. During World War II, when he worked for the wire service United Press, he covered the Battle of the Bulge and D-Day (though not, as sometimes has been erroneously written, from the front lines of Normandy’s beaches).

Cronkite is often canonized for three career highlights in his tenure as CBS anchor: welling up while delivering the bulletin of President Kennedy’s death the day of the assassination; being declared “the most trusted man in America” in a poll; and traveling to Vietnam in the wake of the Tet Offensive in 1968, at which point he declared the war unwinnable, prompting Lyndon Johnson’s announcement weeks later that he would not seek reelection. The first of these milestones was an accident: Cronkite broke the news of JFK’s death because the daytime anchor on duty, Harry Reasoner, was out getting lunch. (Reasoner anchored the coverage that night.) The second carries a huge asterisk: The 1972 poll in question, exhumed by former CBS News executive Martin Plissner in his 2000 book *The Control Room*, found that while Cronkite had the highest rating for trustworthiness in America (73 percent), he was the only newsman in a survey that pitted him against politicians. Even Richard Nixon clocked in at 57 percent.

The third of these iconic Cronkite moments, long regurgitated by many (myself included) as an article of faith, has it that LBJ, after watching America’s most trusted man sour on the war, turned to his press secretary, George Christian (or some other aide), and lamented, “If we’ve lost Walter Cronkite, then we’ve lost Mr. Average American.” Recounting this episode in his 1979 book *The Powers That Be*, David Halberstam declared that it was “the first time in American history that a war has been declared over by an anchorman.” But the writers W. Joseph Campbell and Louis Menand have since debunked this claim. There is no evidence that Johnson saw Cronkite’s broadcast that fateful night, or possibly ever, or said any such thing to anyone. The proximate motive for LBJ’s deci-



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sion to abdicate the presidential race was not an anchorman's commentary but the news that Robert Kennedy would soon challenge him in the Democratic primaries as an antiwar candidate.

American editorial and public opinion had turned against the war well before Cronkite publicly did so, in any case—much as it had already turned against Joe McCarthy by the late date that Murrow and Friendly did. (Murrow's broadcast acknowledged the wave of anti-McCarthy opinion cresting through the nation's editorial pages.) The truth is that network anchors, answering through the years to rapacious corporate executives like William Paley at CBS and Jack Welch at NBC, rarely led the way in aggressively challenging authority in Washington. One quasi-exception occurred in 1972, when Cronkite, four months after the Watergate break-in, vexed Paley and the Nixon White House with a two-part special focusing belated national attention on the reportage of Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward in the *Washington Post*. Another departure from typical network-anchor timidity, some 30 years later, was made by Peter Jennings of ABC, whose skepticism about the Iraq War put him ahead of his television-news colleagues and many print journalists as well. Neither Brian Williams (then an MSNBC nightly anchor) nor any of his network peers summoned the bravery required to question the fictional evidence for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction. In terms of damage done, that sin of omission was far more costly than Williams's harmless, if dopey, fictionalized self-profile in courage under enemy fire in Iraq.

**P**ADDY CHAYEFSKY'S satirical movie *Network*, with its apocalyptic portrait of a network entertainment division's corruption of a pristine CBS-like news operation, could not have been better timed.

It was released in 1976, the same year that Roone Arledge, the ABC Sports impresario who had annexed his network's news division, lured Barbara Walters away from NBC with a million-dollar salary to serve as the first female (co-)anchor of the evening news while continuing as a celebrity interviewer. Suddenly anchors became stars of show-business magnitude, as measured by their ballooning seven-figure salaries and the flashiness of their personal publicity. The gap in compensation between the anchor and correspondents in the field soon widened so much at all three networks that

## The reductio ad absurdum of the good-looking white-male anchor is David Muir.



anchoring was incentivized over reporting the news—a development that Cronkite, who missed the anchor-salary boom, would publicly lament in retirement. Richard Salant, the president of CBS News, spoke for received opinion when he condemned Arledge's addition of Walters to the evening news as a “minstrel show.” But the blending of news and entertainment that ABC was pilloried for—and that *Network* inveighed against—was nothing new. Only the scale had been ramped up.

In retrospect, a more prescient film satire of network news appeared in 1987, with James Brooks's *Broadcast News*. Brooks had briefly passed through CBS as a page and news writer at the start of his career. Later, as the co-creator of the CBS sitcom *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, he helped devise the memorable local-news anchorman Ted Baxter, whose boneheaded off-camera intellect and pompous on-camera vanity anticipated every comic send-up of local anchors since. In *Broadcast News*, Brooks moved on to network anchors. The film's prologue introduces an adorable blond, blue-eyed boy in Kansas City, Missouri, circa 1963, who is telling his father his report card is full of C's and D's. “What can you do with yourself if all you can do is

look good?” the boy asks his dad. Brooks freezes the frame and throws up the legend: FUTURE NETWORK ANCHORMAN.

Cronkite and Williams were college dropouts; Jennings didn't finish high school. The little boy in *Broadcast News* grows up, in the hunky form of William Hurt, to be an ambitious, if vacuous, network reporter on his way to succeeding a Cronkite-ish veteran (Jack Nicholson, devilishly enough) as evening-news anchor. Brooks contrasts Hurt's anchor-on-the-make with an equally ambitious, hard-driving network reporter, played by Albert Brooks, who has his own anchor aspirations but is too intense and implicitly too Jewish to beat out his less-weighty Ken doll of a rival. The brains behind both these rival newsmen, and the essential voice in their on-air earpieces, belong to a producer smarter than both of them, played by Holly Hunter and modeled on Susan Zirinsky, a real-life producer still in place at CBS News.

Incredibly, in light of recent events, the plot of *Broadcast News* turns on an incident in which the Hurt anchor-to-be burinishes his image by falsifying his own role in a searing news segment. But the outside world never learns of his ethical transgression, and there is no network suspension. His career moves forward even as worthier news hands are laid off all around him in a brutal round of newsroom downsizing that also looks strikingly contemporary in a movie made almost three decades ago.

In casting Hurt, Brooks was putting his finger on another crucial if often unspoken component in the deification of the network-news anchor: casting for a certain look and all-American pedigree. The first network anchor to have leading-man qualities in the Hollywood manner was Huntley, who had little news experience but was a tall, handsome, and deep-voiced product of small-town Montana. Huntley was partnered with the more cerebral David Brinkley, a seasoned reporter with a wry delivery and a witty writing style, because, as Reuven Frank, the *Huntley-Brinkley Report's* longtime producer, explained, Brinkley didn't have “the authority that the audience wants” and “Huntley did.” What gave Huntley that authority, Frank said, was “that great leonine head and that Murrow-like voice.” The “image of probity or authority” was “a lie,” Frank added, but “people want to believe it.”

Cronkite, like such competitors as Brinkley and the subsequent NBC anchor John Chancellor, did not remotely resemble a movie star. (Truman Capote was so disapproving of Cronkite's screen presence that he tried to talk his friend William Paley out of making him anchor.) By the time of



Cronkite's retirement, the network-casting clichés mocked in *Broadcast News* were entrenched. When I interviewed Cronkite in 2002, he said he was struck by the phenomenon he spotted at journalism schools. "I look around the crowd," he said, "and see who wants to be an anchorperson, not a journalist. The women are all blonde, and so are the men. The few serious journalists look like they got out of bed a little late; they ask questions about the coverage. The others ask: 'How can I get a job? How can I establish my credentials?'" Tom Brokaw, though fitting the anchor model himself in looks and origins (small-town South Dakota), made a point of separating himself from that stereotype when he was on the brink of becoming *Nightly News* anchor. "I always wanted to be a reporter," he told the *Times* in 1980. "This generation just wants to be stars. They're more familiar with a hot comb than with an idea. If there had been no TV for me, I would have gone into print. These people would go into acting."

It was good looks that helped propel Jennings to the anchor chair at ABC at the preposterous age of 26 in 1965. He figured out that being handsome and poised was not enough to make the job satisfying. When he left after three years—guilty of being "too young, possibly too pretty, and probably too Canadian," in the later judgment of Roone Arledge—he fled New York to become a foreign correspondent. It was only after spending nearly a decade making a success of that—among other achievements, he opened the first ABC News bureau in the Arab world, in Beirut—that he returned to anchoring with the reporting stripes to go with his looks. Yet deviations from the network-anchor casting profile remained rare. Only good-looking, nonethnic white men were wanted for the evening news. Except for Walters's short-lived evening-news career at ABC, no Jew has ever been anointed a network evening-news anchor. The later attempts to pair other female co-anchors of ethnic diversity, Connie Chung (at CBS) and Elizabeth Vargas (at ABC), with traditional male anchors came to naught. Until Katie Couric and Diane Sawyer in the past decade, there were no solo women anchors. And no network has ever named an African-American solo evening-news anchor—which makes the cultural and corporate politics all the more fascinating should Comcast seriously consider denying that official promotion to Lester Holt for the restoration of a white anchor caught breaking the rules.

Holt's accidental ascent aside, NBC has been particularly enamored of anchors in the William Hurt-*Broadcast News* image. A decade ago, no one so much as whispered

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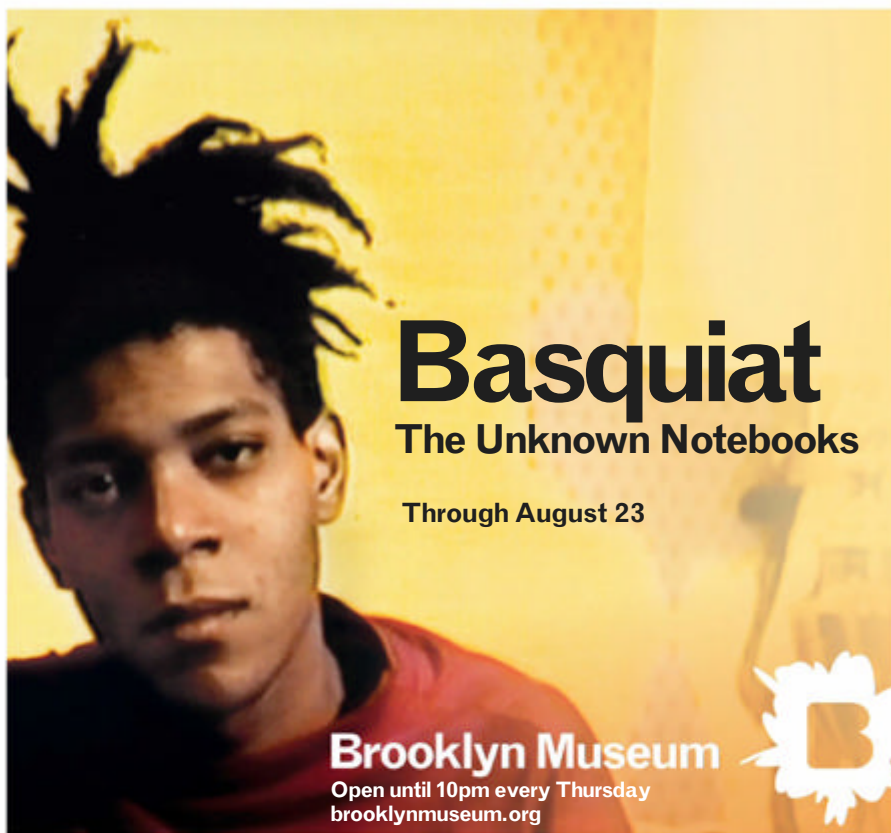
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Tamra Davis (American, b. 1962). Still from *A Conversation with Basquiat* (detail), 2006. 23 min., 22 sec. © Tamra Davis. Courtesy of the artist. By permission of the Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat, all rights reserved. Photo by Jonathan Dorado, Brooklyn Museum.

the thought that the doughy Tim Russert might be Brokaw's successor at *Nightly News*, even though he had more impressive news chops than Williams. When Russert died, the obvious replacement for him at *Meet the Press* was Chuck Todd, a deep-dish political analyst in the Russert mold. But even for that Sunday-morning anchoring job, a nerdy-looking guy didn't stand a chance at beating out the glib David Gregory, whose only visible advantage seemed to be that he looked like central casting's idea of an NBC anchor. The contrasts between Russert and Williams and Todd and Gregory amounted to the Albert Brooks-versus-William Hurt conundrum all over again. (In the real-life case of *Meet the Press*, the nerd ended up inheriting the Earth anyway after Gregory flamed out.)

The reduction ad absurdum of the good-looking white-male anchor is David Muir, who last year succeeded Sawyer at ABC's *World News Tonight*. His relatively modest reporting résumé didn't even include a stint as a White House correspondent, usually a minimal posting required for a network anchor. Muir has already been christened "Ken Dahl" by Bill Maher. Appointed at age 40, he is the youngest evening-news anchor in half a century. But both his elevation and the Twitter-feed-paced broadcast he is anchoring are ABC's open acknowledgments, if any were needed, that the anchorman as we've known him since the Cronkite era is done. Muir's *World News Tonight* takes the network anchor's role back full circle to its origins—a smooth newscaster hopscotching the world for headlines.

It's not a show that needs a Cronkite or a Jennings or a Sawyer or a Brokaw. Arguably any ambitious newsman or newswoman would be overqualified to run it—or would balk at running it. Not for nothing did the most substantive heir apparent to Sawyer at ABC, George Stephanopoulos, dodge the anchoring slot at *World News Tonight* so he could retain his jobs as moderator of the Sunday-morning *This Week* and *Good Morning America*, which is a more powerful perch than the evening news as measured by profits, airtime, and audience demographic. And not for nothing were the title and authority of "chief anchor" at ABC bestowed on Stephanopoulos: He, not Muir, will be center stage for those anchor moments when breaking news actually breaks out and network news swings into 24/7 crisis mode. At CBS, the *Evening News* anchor who succeeded Couric, Scott Pelley, has sent his own signal that he regards anchoring as a secondary priority. He remains an active, not merely a nominal, correspondent at *60 Minutes*, which has more (and more desirable) viewers, more

April 28 – June 7

# Art In Motion

Sterling Hyltin Photo by JR © 2013

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journalism, and more clout than any network evening-news show, his included. Pelley seems to have taken to heart the disdain that *60 Minutes*' elders had for anchoring. Andy Rooney called it a "dumb job," and Don Hewitt dismissed anchormen as "the television equivalent of disc jockeys," spinning "the top 40 news stories."

As has been demonstrated at *60 Minutes* in particular, the most impressive, and bravest, practitioners of television news have rarely been anchors—as exemplified, many noted, by Bob Simon, the correspondent who died in a car crash in the aftermath of Williams's suspension. Simon, who was held hostage for 40 days in an Iraqi jail during the first Gulf War, didn't need to pose in pristine flak jackets or embellish his war stories; his exploits were on-camera. Unlike anchors, who tend to have what Andrew Heyward calls "manufactured authority," he had "earned authority" that he didn't wish to spend down at an anchor desk. It is the in-the-trenches, correspondent-based, anchor-free *60 Minutes* model that the upstart Vice Media adapted for its television incarnation and that it will presumably stick with when it unveils its nightly-news show on HBO later this year.

When Brian Williams has spoken about why he wanted to be a network anchor since roughly the age of 6, he hasn't emphasized reporting but the thrill of being everyone's focus of attention during a national cataclysm. He's fond of quoting Simon & Garfunkel: "a nation turns its lonely eyes to you." But that iteration of the anchor reached its moral peak when America was looking for *Father Knows Best* reassurance in the Vietnam-Watergate era. No doubt some Americans of a certain age may still turn their lonely eyes to a patriarchal television anchor during a national disaster, but many more will be checking their phones.

That's due not just to a technological revolution but to the erosion of confidence in nearly all American institutions and authority figures, including anchormen who seem unreconstructed relics of the *Mad Men* era. Williams is hardly unaware of this. The revelation that he had campaigned to succeed Jay Leno and David Letterman in their late-night gigs, and done so at the height of his success as an anchorman, can be read as the act of a man besotted by comedy, for which he discovered he had a modest talent. But more probably it was a panicked response to the reality that he was the last old-school anchorman standing. The new anchor no one had heard of at *The Daily Show* is likely to matter more than whoever is dodging bullets, real or imaginary, to bring us headlines—and lots of weather—on the *Nightly News*. ■

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Ray Rice's  
redemption  
campaign.

By STEVE FISHMAN

ONE SNOWY EVENING this winter, I drove to see Ray Rice at his mother's house in a quiet middle-class neighborhood in New Rochelle. Three cars were parked at the end of a curved driveway, including a 2015 BMW coupe, which Rice had provided along with the house. "Only the best," said Janet, his mother, who wore a diamond-studded cross around her neck, another gift from her son.

I was here to talk to Rice, a year into probably the swiftest and most decisive fall from grace for an American athlete since Michael Vick—or possibly Mike Tyson. Rice arrived a few minutes after me, and his entry was an event, his family gathering when they heard him at the door. For an NFL running back, Rice is strik-

*Photographs by Christopher Anderson*

“Man,  
They  
Just  
Don’t  
Know  
Who  
I Am”

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ingly unimposing. First, he's small, five feet eight—the first time his mother-in-law met him, she marveled, “*He’s a football player? Look at how tiny he is.*” And to me he looked even younger than 28. He had a hint of a mustache and a frizz of hair on his chin; he wore a white long-sleeved shirt hiding a forearm tattoo that reads GIFTED ONE. He hoisted his then-3-month-old nephew, who lives at the house with Rice’s half-brother and his girlfriend, into the air. His 15-year-old half-sister had wandered in from her room a little nervously. “Crack my back,” Rice said, leaning into her, and she threw her arms around him. “This is normal,” he later said emphatically about the family scene. “Normal.” He’d say the word 13 times that night, in just an hour at the house, like it was a mantra, giving some kind of reassurance.

We took seats on adjacent couches in the living room. Rice faced a credenza holding a flat-screen TV; my view was of a dining room. “I sleep easy knowing my mother’s here,” he said. As we talked, Rice was alternately reflective and combative, resigned to his notoriety and bothered by it. In his mind, he was both guilty and not guilty. He was forthcoming about assaulting his then-fiancée, Janay Palmer, calling the incident “gruesome” and “horrible”—he couldn’t heap enough awful adjectives on it. But he insisted that it wasn’t fair to reduce him to those seconds. “The hardest part for me was people who don’t know me at all were writing about me or talking about me. I understand the seriousness of what I did. But I’m like, *Man, they just don’t know who I am.*”

For six seasons, Rice had been among the best running backs in football—given his size, it was common to say that, pound for pound, he was the best. He made the Pro Bowl three times, led the Baltimore Ravens to the Super Bowl in the 2012 season, and signed a contract that would pay him at least \$35 million over five years. It was a deal of notable length—these days, brutalized running backs are almost interchangeable, with on-field value precipitously dropping after age 27. But by then, Rice was also enormously valuable to the team—and the league—off the field as a sort of golden-boy goodwill ambassador. He had become a local hero in New Rochelle, where he paid for summer basketball leagues for disadvantaged youth and threw barbecues in the Hollow, the crime-ridden projects in which he’d grown up and where his mother had been raised, too. “He gave us hope,” as one New Rochelle friend said to me, reaching for an elegiac tone. And he’d become a charismatic community leader in Baltimore, where he was a philanthropist and what the Ravens called their “go-to guy” for community events. Rice, who’d never been in trouble, embraced the role, telling kids, “If I can do it, you can.” He liked giving back, but community service was also, he later explained to me, partly a way to stay away from home, and Janay.

And then, a little over a year ago, in the early-morning hours just after Valentine’s Day 2014, in an elevator at the Revel hotel in Atlantic City, Rice struck Janay, who collapsed on the floor. Four days later, a video from a security camera outside the elevator leaked, and millions of viewers watched Rice drag Janay’s immobile body out of the elevator. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell suspended Rice for two games—a trivial pun-

ishment but consistent with what Goodell later called an outdated league protocol.

But the video from inside the elevator, which leaked seven months after the incident, showed the blow itself. The league already had a domestic-violence problem—at least a dozen players accused of assault played in the NFL last season—and Rice’s two-game suspension had led to calls for Goodell’s firing. When TMZ posted the new video, the Ravens fired Rice, and Goodell suspended him indefinitely from the league the same afternoon.

The public judgment on Rice seemed unanimous: Nobody felt he should have a future in the sport, and NFL insiders believed that the tape meant he would never play in the NFL again. The CEO of the National Congress of Black Women called him the “poster boy” for domestic violence. Columnist Mike Lupica described him as “an unemployed wife beater.” Even President Obama weighed in: “Hitting a woman is not something a real man does,” he said in a statement.

But in late November, Rice fought to overturn his indefinite suspension and won—under the governing labor law, a player can’t be penalized twice for the same act. And now, after sitting out the 2014–15 season, Rice is eligible to play again, and hopeful.

He could be picked up at any time, he says, although rosters tend to settle in May, right after the NFL draft, which means his chances for a return this season could become clear in the coming weeks. The main obstacle is what NFL insiders call “the visuals”—any team that picked him up would face nightmarish publicity, as well as pressure from sponsors concerned they’d be seen as endorsing a repugnant act by a repugnant character. But in a league with a history of forgiving repugnant characters

(Vick has returned to the field after a prison sentence, for instance), there were also concerns that went beyond reputation, about just how much an aging Rice could actually add to a team on the field.

Like most athletes, Rice has few doubts that he could contribute, and over the past year, he’s made a point of staying fit—working out twice every day, losing close to ten pounds, and boasting that he’s in the best shape of his life. And he’s made it clear how much a return would mean to him—including possibly, in exchange for the chance to redeem himself, playing for the league-minimum salary (for a player with Rice’s experience, about \$870,000). Perhaps most important for a comeback, he’s embarked on a sort of image-repair campaign, guided by corporate- and crisis-PR specialist Matthew Hiltzik, which is why, after spending weeks speaking about Rice with people he grew up with in New Rochelle, I was now talking with him.

It’s not the first time Hiltzik’s expertise has been called on by a high-profile star—a former political strategist who has worked for Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton, Hiltzik has also advised celebrities in trouble, like Justin Bieber, Alec Baldwin, and Ryan Braun. Hiltzik began by arranging interviews with Janay by ESPN (which allowed her to have editorial control over her own interview) and NBC’s *Today* (which did not show the video from inside the elevator), both of which pre-



A video still of Ray Rice and his then-fiancée, Janay Palmer, in February 2014 at the Revel.



sented an alternative story: Rice was not a monster, but a good guy who made “a mistake.” The singularity of the event was crucial to their narrative. Over the course of hours of conversation with both Ray and Janay, that night in Ray’s mother’s home and over the next few weeks, he and Janay insisted repeatedly that, although victims’ advocates suggest a single incident of abuse is extremely rare, the assault in the elevator was an isolated event—an account I heard echoed in interviews with many of the Rices’ friends. As Janay told police in the aftermath of the incident, “That’s not us.” She married Ray the day after he was indicted.

When Ray and Janay spoke about their relationship, they did their best to present it as a happy one, and getting happier. I’d seen them together at an event over Christmas, and they were joking and comfortable, kidding each other over who would wear an oversize Santa cap. But the picture that emerged in conversation was of a relationship that had always been full of challenges. “Being in a relationship with a celebrity is hard,” Janay said. “Everything is about them. Ray had to have people around him.” Janay would find herself telling him, “We don’t need all these people at the house.” Ray had even given her a nickname; he called her “Dreamkiller.”

RICE MET Janay Palmer when she was 14 and he was 15. She lived a town over, in Mount Vernon, and was a different kind of girl from the ones Rice knew in the Hollow. His father had been murdered when he was 1; her father, Joe, was a Teamster who made a decent living. As the oldest child, Ray was assigned the role of the man of the house, taking jobs on top of schoolwork and football; his mother would draw him aside and say, “Ray, I need money.”

The Palmers sent Janay to parochial school, where she was president of the student council. When Ray got into football, he’d wake up at 5 a.m. to train, springing up and down the Hollow’s stairs. When Janay was interested in fashion, her parents sent her to classes at F.I.T. And while Ray liked Janay from the moment he talked to her, he was attracted to her family, too. “I did come from a two-parent household, which I know drew him,” Janay told me. “He became one with my family.” Ray took to calling Janay’s father Dad.

Rice was dominant on the football field—“When I didn’t want to think about the situation I was in, I had football,” he said. At the youth level, an opposing coach once refused to let his team play unless Rice was taken out of the game, and in high school, he’d lead New Rochelle to a state championship. But because of his size, he wasn’t heavily recruited by college coaches. A few thought he’d make a good defensive back, but he chose Rutgers for the chance to play in the offensive backfield. “They weren’t going to take the ball out of my hands,” Rice told me. “They were one of the worst teams in the nation, but I said to myself, *I see an opportunity*. My goal when I went there was for people to say Ray Rice and Rutgers football in one sentence.” They would. In 2006, he led Rutgers to its first bowl-game victory; the next year, he’d break numerous school rushing records.

Rice entered the NFL draft after his junior year and was selected by the Ravens in the second round. He was 21 and hadn’t ever lived far from New Rochelle. “I was scared to be alone,” he recalled. He took a cousin with him to Baltimore, and he wanted Janay to come, too, which surprised her. They’d been friends for years, but only romantic for a year or so; she hadn’t thought they were that serious. But when he cried and asked her to move with him, she was thrilled. “I knew I was the one then,” she said.

“He wanted her to live with him,” recalled Janay’s mother, but her parents vetoed the idea of cohabitation. “You need to concentrate on what you’re about to get into,” Joe Palmer told Ray. “You don’t want a person to sit around living off you. You want her to have her own life so you can be proud of her.” But Janay had been accepted to Towson University outside Baltimore, and her parents said it was all right to go. “Everything fell into place,” Janay said.

In Baltimore, though, Rice’s priorities were elsewhere. “Football came before everything and everyone,” he told me. Janay accepted that as necessary, but it was a sore point. “It was definitely frustrating. It was hard knowing I wasn’t his first priority,” she said.

And it got more challenging when she got pregnant and gave birth, in early 2012, to Rayven, named after Ray and his team.

Rayven didn’t sleep well, and “I felt I was doing everything by myself,” Janay said. “After a while, I resented that. I felt like a walking zombie. I told Ray he needed to change more diapers.”

Instead, Rice found excuses to stay away. He overbooked charity events—often three back-to-back on his one day off each week. Afterward, “I get home, I’m spent,” he recalled. “There’s no time to talk. ‘I got practice the next day.’ He’d just head off to sleep.

“It got to the point where if she had an issue, I would

basically just go silent,” he told me. “There wasn’t a lot of yelling, screaming, nothing. I would just wake up, go to practice. Then game day gets here. I’d rush for three touchdowns. The family’s over at the house. She’s still got that problem she’s thinking about. And I think, *I scored three touchdowns today. Everything’s all right.*”

“That’s not what a man does,” Janay would tell him. “I know what a man is supposed to be. I know how a man acts in a relationship. I know what a father is. I experienced it.” Later she told me, “I wasn’t trying to be malicious, but it had to sting.”

**V**

ALentine’s Day 2014 marked the beginning of an offseason that Rice had been looking forward to for months. The 2013 season had been the worst of his career, and he’d played through a hip injury, rushing for just half the yards of previous seasons. The Ravens didn’t make the playoffs, and part of the blame fell on Rice. Some observers were wondering if his days as a Pro Bowler had come to a close.

Janay had wanted to spend the holiday together. “*It’s Valentine’s Day, we should do something ourselves,*” she remembered thinking. Instead, “he plans a group thing” in Atlantic City, with



Rice pauses while addressing a news conference with his wife, Janay, on May 23, 2014.

his half-brother and his girlfriend and another Baltimore couple. “It was an annoyance to me,” Janay said. “I was a little perturbed, though I didn’t communicate that to him.” She said she was silent during the three-hour car ride.

When they got to Atlantic City, the friends hit the club inside the Revel casino, the Royal Jelly. They ordered a few bottles of vodka. Rice had been on a cleanse, and a few drinks did him in. They left for the Revel’s late-night restaurant, where Rice went to the bathroom and threw up. Back at the table, Rice and Janay bickered, Rice fiddling with his phone. “She put her hands in my face,” he later told an arbitration panel. Rice got up and left, heading back to the room.

“I’m in the clear,” he later said. He stood by the elevator, texting his friend back at the table, “Is everything alright?” Janay, though, had followed him. Seeing him on his phone, she went for it. Rice cursed at her and made a “very vulgar” comment. She walked by, turned, took a step toward him, and slapped his face. “We were drunk and tired,” Janay said later. Rice followed her slowly to the elevator.

Rice and Janay had been instructed not to talk to me about what happened inside the elevator, but confidential transcripts from the arbitration hearings tell the story. Janay slapped him again, and then Rice struck her with his open palm. It was a hard blow. She was furious, balled her fists and lunged at him. Rice hit her on the side of the head with his left hand, and she was knocked backward, banging her head against the rail of the elevator. Ray later said he was stunned by the sound of the impact.

The blow looked awful. But what Rice did next was a different kind of ghastly—dragging his unconscious fiancée from the elevator and depositing her in its doorway, face down. He didn’t comfort her or kneel next to her. Her legs had come apart. He nudged them closed with his foot, then a hand, as if her modesty were the issue. A security guard arrived, bent beside her, and told Rice to move away. Rice paced, looked up at the ceiling. Later he claimed he was terrified and in shock, but he seemed indifferent—callous, as Goodell later said. In the hall, his first call was to his agent, then his mother. “Ma, I made a huge mistake,” he told her. “I’m probably going to go to jail tonight.”

**R**ICE DID GO TO JAIL, but for just a few hours. A few months later, on May 20, a judge allowed him to enter a diversion program rather than face prosecution on assault charges. Three days later, as if to celebrate, the Ravens organized a carefully scripted press conference, designed to show support for Rice and allow him to acknowledge how poorly he’d behaved, apologize for it, and ask for forgiveness—all while Janay was by his side. The optics were good, but the press conference was a disaster. The Ravens had given Rice talking points, which he scrolled through on his phone as he spoke. He apologized to the NFL and to his fans, but not to his wife,

thanking her instead “for loving me where I was weak and building [me] up where I was strong.” Then Janay read a brief statement apologizing for her part in the incident. “I do deeply regret the role that I played.” The Ravens immediately tweeted her apology, triggering an uproar: Rice had apologized to everyone but the person who most deserved an apology. The team had trotted her out to take the heat off him, even blame herself for the beating.

A year after the incident, Rice was still idling at home. Other domestic abusers had a different fate, like Greg Hardy, a star pass rusher convicted of assaulting his girlfriend, who had been signed after he’d appealed and had the conviction overturned—the Cowboys gave him an \$11 million deal, and the owner’s daughter called it “an incredible opportunity.” But unfortunately for Rice, “there’s just not that much difference between a good running back and a great one,” one scout told me. Considered “an aging player” at a dispensable position, Rice is likely to find few takers, even at the league-minimum salary. “There won’t be a lot of opportunities,” said Leigh Steinberg, the agent on whom the film *Jerry Maguire* is said to be based. “But he’s too good not to get a shot. It only takes one team out of 32.”

Rice told me that he’s thinking of this as an injury year.

“Except I wasn’t physically hurt, I was mentally hurt.” As part of his agreement with New Jersey prosecutors, Rice has been in counseling, and you can hear the language of therapy as he speaks about the incident and his life since. In his telling, the “mistake” in the elevator was a starting point that had sent him on a journey of self-discovery. His evolving view is that his God-given talent had been, in part, a trap. “I was told since high school that I’d be in the NFL. Once my

football playing started taking off, and I started scoring all those touchdowns, I was the golden child.” People cared about football, not about him. “Nobody ever had courage enough to try to give me the tools of life,” he said, and he’d suppressed his unhappy past, which he’d come to believe held the secret to who he is. “I’m learning to love myself,” he said. “It’s unfortunate that it took this situation for me to face myself.”

“There will always be pain,” Janay said. “He’s figuring out ways to cope with it.”

PERHAPS THE MOST remarkable feature of Rice’s image-rehabilitation project is that it involves the testimony of his therapist—Dr. Paul Ball, a large, shaven-headed ex-college football player with the booming voice of a Sunday preacher, which he is. It is exceptionally unusual for a therapist to speak publicly about a patient, but Rice asked Ball to help, and Ball, who had been counseling the couple even before the assault, had agreed. “I consider Ray one of my sons,” Ball explained.

“He was in a very dark place,” Ball said, recalling his first meeting with Rice after the assault. “He was very, very remorseful and very, very sorry and in a lot of pain.” Rice talked about “checking out.” “I gave him probably three sessions to cry,” Ball said. “And then, after that, no more crying.”

“Dr. Ball was the first person that made me open up about my past,” Rice said. “It was the first time I felt, *Man, I’m not hiding anymore!*” They talked about (Continued on page 107)

“I gave him probably three sessions to cry,” said Rice’s therapist. “Then, after that, no more crying.”







South Dakota,  
2008.

IS HILLARY CLINTON ANY





# GOOD AT RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT?

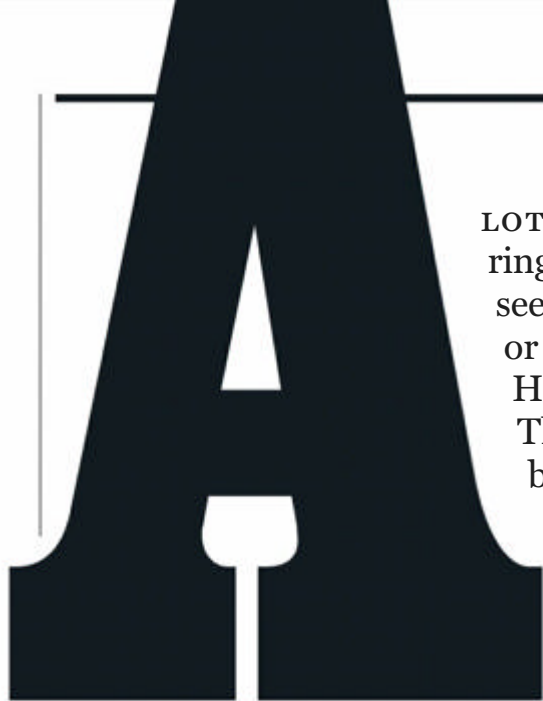
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**And how much does it matter, anyway?**

*By* **JASON ZENGERLE**

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LOT CAN HAPPEN BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, but barring something truly unprecedented and totally unforeseen—a meteorite, a Benghazi revelation, a health scare, or a Martin O'Malley groundswell—on July 28, 2016, Hillary Clinton will step onto a stage in Philadelphia. There, surrounded by red-white-and-blue bunting and balloons—as well as Bill, Chelsea, baby granddaughter Charlotte, and tens of thousands of screaming Democrats—she will officially become her party's presidential nominee. It will be a long-awaited and historic moment, the first time a woman (and the second time a Clinton) has topped a major party's

presidential ticket. And already some Republicans are licking their chops, while some Democrats are experiencing pangs of buyer's remorse.

For much of the Obama presidency, there has been a general sense of calm among Democrats about their chances to retain the White House. Clinton's tenure as secretary of State was distinguished, if not especially consequential. Her favorability ratings hovered around all-time highs. It wasn't just that her nomination seemed a foregone conclusion; given the dysfunction of the Republican Party and the demographic changes in the American electorate, the race seemed hers to lose. It was hard to find a Democratic operative not in fairly high spirits.

Then, over the past few weeks, the country watched as Clinton dealt with the fallout from the revelation that she used a personal email server while heading up the State Department. Her fiercest critics have charged that she employed the private email system to skirt government transparency laws and, in the process, endangered national security. Her supporters worry that, even if Clinton's private email was legal and innocent, it was a self-inflicted error that has needlessly handed her enemies yet another cudgel to wield against her. But the glee and regret among Republicans and Democrats have been most pronounced over the disastrous press conference Clinton held at the United Nations to try to put the matter to rest, which served to remind them of something many had forgotten: what an abominable candidate she can be.

Standing in front of a tapestry replica of Picasso's *Guernica*, she was testy, brittle, and, above all, unpersuasive—failing to demonstrate the most elementary political skills, much less those learned at Toastmasters or Dale Carnegie. “She read her prepared remarks like a high-school student,” marvels Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster who's been a close observer of Clinton for more than two decades. “She looked down at her notes, then she looked up to the left, down at her notes, then up to the right. Almost the entire time, she avoided making eye contact with anyone.” A prominent Democratic operative is still horrified by the spectacle. “She came off as defensive and artificially put-off,” he says. Another Democratic operative says, “I'm a huge Hillary Clinton fan. I hope desperately she's the next president of the United States, because I think she'd be a great president. But after that press conference, I do have major concerns about her ability as a campaigner and to get elected.”

The performance made a host of other recent Clinton missteps—seemingly minor at the time—suddenly loom larger in the minds of anxious Democrats. There was her strangely vapid *Foggy Bottom* memoir, *Hard Choices*, which racked up middling sales, and her obvious rust in the interviews she did to promote it. There was her continued buck-raking on the paid-speaking circuit, which seemed tone-deaf, if not downright greedy, for someone about to embark on a presidential campaign. And there was her hard-to-figure delay in assembling a staff for the campaign, so that, when news of the hidden emails broke, she had no infrastructure to defend her and instead had to rely on a hodgepodge of veteran freelancers like James Carville and Lanny Davis, whose reappearance made the latest Clinton scandal feel exhaustingly familiar. Democrats may be constitutionally prone to hysteria, but even so, the whiplash of these few weeks has been notable. Now, days before Clinton's official announcement that she is, once again, in it to win it, some in her party are on edge.

Pat Buchanan, the venerable Republican operative who advised Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, likes to assess politicians as “political athletes.” Putting aside ideologies, policy preferences, even personalities, how do they perform on the political playing field? “It's charisma, charm, savvy,” he says. “Being a political athlete is having an extra dimension—it's not learned; you're born with it.” In Buchanan's long career, the greatest political athletes he's encountered have been John F. Kennedy, Reagan, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama. “They're naturals: Roy Hobbs or Mickey Mantle,” he says. Hillary, in Buchanan's view, is the furthest thing from a natural: “She's like Pete Rose, who has to grind out every hit.”

The grind can be obvious watching Clinton on the campaign trail. In her two successful Senate races and her unsuccessful presidential run in 2008, she often struggled to exhibit the basic qualities required of politicians. “Let's remember who she's beaten in her career: Rick Lazio and John Spencer,” says a Democratic consultant who has worked for and against Hillary. “The only time she's run against anyone decent, she's lost.” Where most pols project warmth, she often runs cold. Her speeches can be leaden and forced. She tightens up in unscripted moments.

Above all, she bristles at what the public and the press now want most from politicians: authenticity. As she said in a press-conference soliloquy during her 2000 Senate campaign, “Who are you?” and all of that. I don't know if that is the right question.



Even people you think you know extremely well, do you know their entire personality? Do they, at every point you're with them, reveal totally who they are? Of course not. We now expect people in the public arena to somehow do that. I don't understand the need behind that."

"She's a schemer and a planner and a plodder," says the GOP consultant Rick Wilson, who worked for Rudy Giuliani during his aborted 2000 Senate campaign against Clinton. "You need people like that in politics, but most of the time they end up as campaign strategists, not candidates." Buchanan is more blunt: "She reminds me of Nixon."

In 1998, when Clinton was first thinking about running for the Senate, she sought the advice of her and her husband's long-time adviser Harold Ickes. According to Jeff Gerth and Don Van Natta Jr.'s *Her Way*, the pair were deep into their meeting—having pored over a map of New York and discussed the myriad local issues she would have to grasp—when a thought suddenly occurred to Ickes. "I don't even know if you'd be a good candidate, Hillary," he told her. Nearly two decades later, we still don't know.

## THE EXHILARATING, THE EXASPERATING



↑ In 2011, when checking her email became a viral meme.

↑ Last month, defending her email practices.

AND YET, THERE'S an increasingly popular school of thought, especially among political scientists but also among some political consultants, that being a good candidate is overrated. Some even argue that it's irrelevant—not just to what sort of president a candidate would be, but also to whether he or she can get to the White House in the first place. "Most of Hillary's strengths and weaknesses as a candidate really won't be decisive to the outcome of the election, in part because she's going to be facing a candidate who also has strengths and weaknesses," says George Washington University political scientist John Sides. Although there can be extreme talent differentials between candidates in down-ballot races, once you get to the big time of a presidential campaign, any candidate capable of winning his or her party's nomination is going to be playing in the same league as his or her opponent. "It's difficult in a presidential election for one of the two candidates to be clearly superior," Sides says.

Academics partial to this analysis will grant that, say, Obama could rally a crowd better than Mitt Romney, or that Bill Clinton could at least appear to feel a person's pain more than either Bob Dole or George H.W. Bush. But every nominated candidate for president since 1972, when Democrats lost their collective minds and put up George McGovern, has been highly competent (and each winner has had deficiencies that would likely have been more memorable had he lost). "No one thinks John Kerry or Mitt Romney were good candidates," says Dartmouth political scientist Brendan Nyhan, "but they both came very close to winning the presidency." This is a testament to the elites in both the Democratic and Republican parties, who are always partial to nominees that are capable and electable. "They're not going to put up someone just because they like and trust them," says David Karol, a University of Maryland political scientist and co-author of *The Party Decides*. "There's a baseline they have to clear: They have to be able to win." It may take countless debates; the winnowing process of the primary may be torture; but, with rare exceptions, the loons always lose. "Ask Howard Dean"—the antiwar Vermont governor who briefly set the Democratic rank and file's hearts afire in 2004 before the party elites smacked him down—"if electability concerns matter," says Nyhan.

Which is why, as Sides and his co-author, Lynn Vavreck, argue in *The Gamble*, their book about the 2012 election, a presidential campaign is less akin to a boxing match—"where the momentum may be shifting back and forth with every punch and the knockout blow could come at any moment"—than to a tug-of-war. "Both sides are pulling very hard," they write. "If, for some reason, one side let go—meaning they stopped campaigning—then the other side would soon benefit. But of course the candidates do not let go and that makes it hard to see that their efforts are making a difference ... We argue that it means they are equally effective." According to this theory, what ends up decisive in a tug-of-war are certain fundamentals beyond the control of the candidates or their campaigns. "Demographics, the economy, and war and peace are more important than whether someone has a nice smile or is a good debater," says Karol.

The election model that's most in vogue—that scored the highest when applied to presidential elections since World War II, correctly predicting every outcome since 1992—is one created by Emory political scientist Alan Abramowitz called "Time for a Change." Abramowitz argues that the fundamentals in a presidential election are bedevilingly simple: the incumbent president's approval rating in late June or early July, the rate of real GDP growth in the second quarter, and how many terms the party has been in the White House.

In 2012, for instance, Obama's relatively lopsided victory may have shocked Republicans on Election Night, but by Abramowitz's reckoning it was practically preordained. Although second-

**“If she could charm a White House full of staffers who, just a year earlier, were literally paid to destroy her, she can get a mom in New Hampshire to think she’d make a great president.”**

quarter real GDP growth was a relatively unimpressive 1.5 percent and Obama’s approval rating was a good-but-not-great 46 percent that June, he was seeking reelection, and, according to Abramowitz, “first-term incumbents rarely lose.” In fact, he believes that being a first-term incumbent is worth 4 percentage points. There was nothing in the Abramowitz model that looked good for John McCain in 2008 (bad economy, bad approval ratings of a second-term president from McCain’s party). In 1988, by contrast, George H.W. Bush was also running to give his party a third term, but Q2 real GDP growth that year was a booming 5.24 percent and Ronald Reagan’s approval rating was above 50 percent.

Sound familiar? “If Obama’s approval rating is close to 50 percent and the economy is growing at a decent rate in the fall of 2016—both of which seem quite possible, maybe even likely—then I think Hillary Clinton would have a decent chance of winning,” Abramowitz says. But then there’s the “Time for a Change” factor and those four extra points Obama enjoyed in 2012 that Hillary won’t have this time around. In other words, it would be an extremely close race.

Which brings us full circle. “What determines the outcome in 2016,” Abramowitz says, “could very well be the quality of the candidates.”

**I**T’S ALL ENOUGH to drive lay political junkies batshit. Just what, exactly, should they be obsessing about? The next news report that, say, Clinton once gave a paid speech to a waste-management firm that was hired by her family’s foundation to do relief work in Haiti while it simultaneously received capital from her son-in-law’s hedge fund, which also happens to employ the Haitian president’s niece as its in-house florist? Or the revised Q4 housing-starts report? What if, the same week that Clinton’s busted for hiring a custodial service that employs undocumented immigrants for her Brooklyn campaign headquarters, Obama announces an election-year income-tax holiday? What’s going to matter more in November 2016?

As much as a presidential race is a referendum on the candidates, it’s also a referendum on the dominant analytic style of the moment. The 2008 election was the campaign as soap opera, with an extraordinary cast of characters and the narrative suspense of the best television shows, scripted or reality. Four years later, it was Nate Silver’s world (all that mattered were the fundamentals), and the rest of us—Obama and Romney included—were just living in it, trying to parse which pollster’s numbers were skewed and whose models were best. At the beginning of this presidential election, the analytical innovations coming from the smartest academics offer a framework for following the race that is at once liberating and terrifying: Nothing really matters. Unless it does.

To the extent that Clinton exerts at least some control over the destiny of her campaign, the primary source of fear among her supporters has always been her struggle to appear natural and relaxed in public. In his book about Clinton’s 2000 Senate

campaign, *Hillary’s Turn*, Michael Tomasky laments “her exasperating tightness.” In the Senate, Chuck Schumer used to tell aides that Clinton was “the most opaque person you’ll ever meet in your life.” Schumer would also add that if he’d “lived her life, I’d be that way, too,” and though Clinton is sometimes critiqued for appearing inauthentic, it’s very possible that this tightness is absolutely honest. She is an introvert by temperament, surely traumatized by the invective thrown at her during her time as First Lady, consequently terrified of spontaneity, and insufficiently skilled at pretending otherwise. Still, genuine cautiousness can also be off-putting, and by the time of Clinton’s last presidential run, her opacity and rigidity had morphed into what looked like haughty entitlement. She seemed either unwilling or unable to campaign in a way that allowed voters to feel they got to know her personally.

For most of 2007, her campaign events more often resembled arena-rock spectacles than the intimate gatherings Iowans and New Hampshireites expect. When Clinton did submit to town halls, allowing for give-and-takes with voters, her staffers were occasionally caught planting questions. Clinton’s stamina is legendary (she traveled nearly 1 million miles as secretary of State), but it didn’t seem to translate to campaigning. “Presidential campaigns in the early going are a series of exhausting indignities,” says a Democratic operative who worked for one of Clinton’s 2008 rivals. “How many diners a day can you bring yourself to visit? Can you make the fifth phone call to some city councilman in Dubuque for an endorsement? She didn’t want to do all that stuff.”

Then, suddenly, she did. After a third-place finish in Iowa, with her back against the wall, Clinton morphed into a more impressive candidate. The most famous example of this transformation was when, two days before the New Hampshire primaries, she briefly teared up at a Portsmouth coffee shop while answering a question about how she stayed upbeat in the face of so much political adversity. But those who worked for and against her in 2008 point to other instances of her newfound skills. In New Hampshire, she began staying late at town halls to answer every question (none of them planted) and even stood on street corners at rush hour—out with the people and among the traffic—to wave at passing cars “like she was running for mayor of Manchester,” recalls former WMUR political director Scott Spradling. In Texas, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, her events were smaller and she worked the rope line with abandon. “She was at her best when she was very low to the ground,” says one former Obama adviser. Another senior member of Obama’s 2008 campaign team says, “We might have lost to her if we’d been facing the Hillary of New Hampshire and Ohio as opposed to the one that we faced all of 2007.”





Indeed, Clinton's performance in the latter half of the 2008 campaign, as well as her subsequent development, has convinced some operatives that she can achieve the sort of connection with voters she's always been faulted for lacking. "She doesn't get enough credit for being good in a room with people and making them feel listened to," says Tommy Vietor, a former Obama aide. "If she could charm a White House full of staffers who, just a year earlier, were literally paid to destroy her, she can get a mom in New Hampshire to think she'd make a great president." It's a realization that Clinton herself has apparently taken to heart. "I think you'll see a return to much more personal interactions on the campaign trail rather than big cattle-call gymnasium events," says one person close to Clinton's nascent campaign.

Perhaps her loss in 2008 was traumatic enough to fundamentally rewire Hillary Clinton the candidate—though how, then, to explain the *Guernica* press conference? More likely, the Clinton running this campaign will resemble all the previous ones, and her difficulty projecting something that reads as sincerity will be akin to Obama's aloofness: a negative character trait that sometimes slips into remission but will dog her until retirement. It's also possible that her weakness here is overblown. To many observers at the time, the 2008 primary race looked like a perfect controlled experiment: a long slog between two candidates, and as soon as one loosened up, she started winning again. But extensive analyses now suggest that Clinton's personality shift wasn't what drove her temporary comeback. "There was a media narrative constructed around the ups and downs of 2008, but if you look at the demographic makeups of those states and whether it was a primary or caucus, that ends up explaining most of the variation in their performance from state to state," says David Karol. "In Pennsylvania, she was throwing back shots and playing pool while Obama was bowling gutter balls, but Pennsylvania is a primary rather than a caucus state, and the Pennsylvania demographics were more favorable to her."

Campaigns are punctuated by moments of high stagecraft—debates, convention speeches—that require oratorical talents that

Clinton does not possess in abundance. "She doesn't make mistakes in the debates, but that's different than being good," says a Democratic operative. "She doesn't win a lot of people over." The former Obama aide Bill Burton, who thought Clinton did well in her 2008 debates, nonetheless sums up her performances another way: "Maya Angelou said people won't remember what you say or do but they'll remember how you made them feel. If anything, she was a little too driven by data and less driven by how she was going to come off." In fact, one of the greatest sources of agita among Democrats these days is that, deprived of a competitive primary, Clinton will face her well-seasoned Republican opponent without having debated in more than eight years.

But various academic studies have shown that even the debates that we consider most game-changing—Kennedy's besting of a sweaty, five-o'clock-shadowed Nixon in 1960; Michael Dukakis's botching of a question involving the hypothetical rape and murder of his wife; George H.W. Bush's impatiently glancing at his watch in 1992—had little or no impact on voter preferences. "Thinking of debates as changing people's minds about politics is like thinking fans watching a basketball game are going to change which team they're

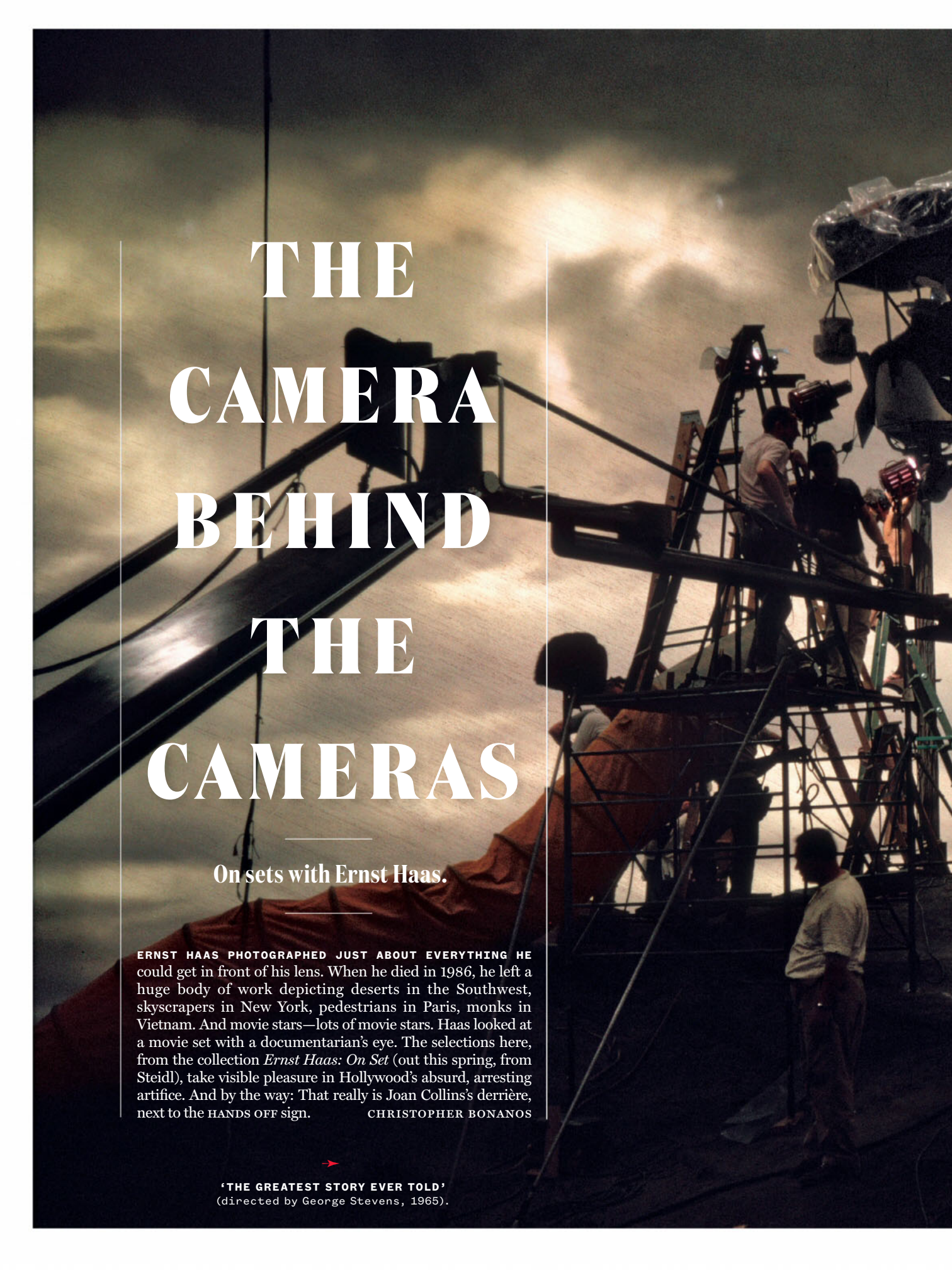
rooting for," says Dartmouth's Nyhan. "The people who watch debates are already invested, and the people who aren't invested don't care so they don't pay attention to debates."

Clinton might give a terrific acceptance speech at the Democratic convention; it could also be lackluster. Chances are it won't be remembered by the fall. Dukakis accepted his party's nomination to the strains of Neil Diamond and led George H.W. Bush by 17 points after the Democratic convention; Sarah Palin seemed to light a fuse under John McCain's candidacy with her convention star turn in 2008, and he surged five points ahead of Obama. Or consider Al Gore, whose eight-point convention bounce in 2000 is one of the largest since World War II. "Was Al Gore's speech that great? He was sweaty, and he made out with Tipper at the end. But people wanted to believe," says Nyhan. "A lot of what a convention is doing is reminding people who they are, what their partisan loyalties are, and what the state of the country is. Gore was underperforming where the fundamentals suggested he should be, and so he got a big convention bump. It was people snapping back into place."

THEN THERE'S CLINTON'S ability to give voters reasons to oppose her. For such a disciplined, on-message candidate, she's committed an inordinate number of gaffes over the years. In fact, some believe it's that discipline that has led to her biggest blunders. "She has a habit of knowing what her vulnerabilities are," says a Republican operative who's spent a great deal of time studying Clinton in preparation for 2016, "and really overcompensating to try to make up for them."

For instance, in 2007, "in a panic about Obama"—as a Hillary strategist later confessed to Gerth and Van Natta—when confronted with the prospect of speaking opposite him at a civil-rights commemoration in Alabama, she adopted a ridiculous southern drawl. Her comparison of Putin to Hitler at the height of last year's Ukraine crisis was presumably an attempt to offset her failed Russian-reset policy during her time in Obama's Cabinet. And it can't have been a coincidence that Clinton's heavy-handed (Continued on page 107)





# THE CAMERA BEHIND THE CAMERAS

On sets with Ernst Haas.

ERNST HAAS PHOTOGRAPHED JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING HE could get in front of his lens. When he died in 1986, he left a huge body of work depicting deserts in the Southwest, skyscrapers in New York, pedestrians in Paris, monks in Vietnam. And movie stars—lots of movie stars. Haas looked at a movie set with a documentarian's eye. The selections here, from the collection *Ernst Haas: On Set* (out this spring, from Steidl), take visible pleasure in Hollywood's absurd, arresting artifice. And by the way: That really is Joan Collins's derrière, next to the HANDS OFF sign. CHRISTOPHER BONANOS

➔  
**'THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD'**  
(directed by George Stevens, 1965).









**RAE DAWN CHONG IN 'QUEST FOR FIRE'**  
(directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, 1981).





DUSTIN HOFFMAN IN  
'LITTLE BIG MAN'  
(directed by Arthur Penn, 1970).





↑ **'LOVE AND DEATH'**  
(directed by Woody Allen, 1975).





JOAN COLLINS IN 'LAND OF THE PHAROHS'  
(directed by Howard Hawks, 1955).



# TELE



Matele,  
photographed in  
Johannesburg.





# What Women Look Like Now ...

... In Johannesburg, Seoul,  
Tel Aviv, and London.

*The Cut's* beauty fact-finding mission spanned ten countries around the world. Photographers took lots of pictures, and we looked for patterns. Eyebrows! Piercings! Not surprisingly, when you search for patterns, you find them. And so ...





Jieun



YeonJoo



Minok



Soojung



Huira



Seongeun



Haenam



Arim



Seon

The SUPER-STRAIGHT EYEBROWS of  
**SEOUL**

Photographs by SEUNGJEOM CHOI

The archless brow has clearly gone from fashion-forward trend to beauty staple in South Korea. We couldn't find a single shot of an eyebrow with bend in it.

*Straight brows require no small amount of shaping—a little Shiseido The Makeup natural eyebrow pencil can help. Amorepacific cushion compacts are also very popular in Korea as a new, weird, moist way of applying foundation with a sponge.*





Stella



Catia



Brit



Terry



Nóra



Estelle



Adi



Eden



Harlie

The POST-PUNK LOOK of  
*LONDON*

Photographs by CLAUDIA ROCHA

Here, it seemed like everything was a statement, from the bright lipsticks to the cheek piercings to the blunt bangs to the inner-corner eye shadow.

*Even M.A.C's purple Heroine lipstick and copious amounts of Lancôme's Hypnôse volume mascara feel totally normal at 9 a.m. in Shoreditch. DIY bangs can be done with any old kitchen shears.*





Gal



Elina



Noi



Hadar



Dafna



Elizabeth



Noa



Yarden



Sarah

The BARE FACES of  
**TEL AVIV**

Photographs by MIRI DAVIDOVITZ

The “no makeup” makeup look is one thing, but these women were going about their days with nothing but lip balm and moisturizer.

*It's not as if the natural look requires no products. You might try Murad Oil Control Mattifier SPF 15 or R+Co dry shampoo or an uncomplicated scent like Prada's Infusion D'Iris.*





Beulah



Aphinda



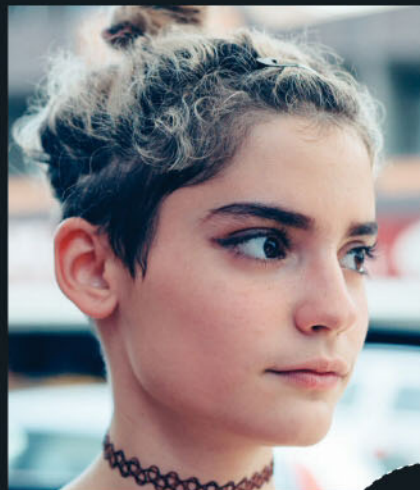
Masego



Jebel



Buhle



Michaela



Amanda



Tebogo



Palesa

For more from each of these cities, plus Paris, New York, Rio, Nairobi, and Mumbai, visit [thecut.com](http://thecut.com).

# The CREATIVE HAIR of JOHANNESBURG

Photographs by KEAGAN GREEN

Honestly, the hair in almost every picture was amazing—braided, dyed, twisted, or left natural.

You want to look like this? You need the right hair, for starters. Braids can be a four- to eight-hour time commitment, but the maintenance is relatively easy. Try Briogeo Be Gentle, Be Kind Co-Wash, and if they get itchy, Dr. Jackson's Coconut Melt can help soothe the scalp.



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Pat LaFrieda  
MEAT PURVEYORS

siggis





# STRATEGIST

..... SEE-THROUGH TABLES ..... SISTER STORES .....  
LOOK BOOK MEETS A FORMER CHILD GOSPEL STAR ..... PLATT ON THE POLO BAR  
..... A \$15 TASTING MENU ..... ACTUALLY GOOD TEX-MEX .....

*SPRING  
TRAVEL 2015*

## Targeted Tour Guides

*See p.66*

THE SNOW MELTING into sidewalk muck means it's time to dig up that bucket hat and skip town. To narrow down the overwhelming travel options, we went straight to the locals—but not just any locals. Starting on page 66, a Reykjavik booze-maker, **a Northern Oregon surfer**, a Santiago-based chef, and nine other experts with newly flourishing scenes at home offer picks for their go-to biscuit-factory bars, California-rivalling waves, and foraged sea strawberries. Leave the Canada Goose at home.



# BEST BETS

## ASK A SHOP CLERK

**Tiffany McCrary**  
just opened the  
subterranean  
**\$10 Vintage Shop**  
in Bushwick.  
(By appointment  
at 16 Cypress Ave.;  
404-263-8550.)



So this is like a dollar store for vintage? This new showroom is in my workspace, in an underground art studio. Since I have basically no overhead, I can afford to charge \$10 for a 1980s Gucci cross-body with a pigskin lining and a Dior blazer and a denim Levi's jacket with the collar all shredded. If I come across it in my travels, I grab it. But it's not your typical dollar-store experience. I set out vintage trays with Japanese Hibiki bourbon and a hookah, and I play Tina Turner and the Doors on the record player.



## SIDE BY SIDE

Two new women's shops,  
each run by a pair of sisters.



**SAM & LEX**  
860 Lexington Ave.

Alex: University of Colorado 2011, ex-sales director for Shashi Jewelry.

Sam: University of Colorado 2012, ex-personal-shopping assistant at Bergdorf.

UES 20-somethings seeking a department-store alternative.

Blue Paloma Silk loungewear (\$308) and Mara Hoffman knits (\$225); sheepskin throws.

Blake Lively.



**WILLIAM OKPO**  
6 Fulton St., April 10

**Big sis** Darlene: African-American studies and women's history at Lehman.

**Little sis** Lizzy: Business at Pace, former Opening Ceremony and Nylon intern.

**Inspiration** Their Staten Island school uniforms and '90s R&B groups like TLC.

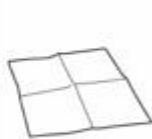
**Vibe** Pleated crop-tops (\$155) and eyelet flare pants (\$315), surrounded by warm wood and air plants.

**Celebrity inspiration** Solange Knowles.

## HOW TO

### ➔ Puff a Pocket Square

Three tips from **Allyson Wicha Lewis of the Tie Bar**, popping up at 250 Mott Street through June.



**1**  
**Lay it flat:** Smooth the patterned side faceup on the table.



**2**  
**Pull it through:** Pinch up the center of the square. Make a napkin-ring loop



with your other forefinger and thumb; thread the square through. Flip its tips back up a third of the way.

**3**  
**Blouse it:** Plop the square into your breast pocket, and flick to puff.

## TOP FIVE

➔ The new **Bushwick Flea**, at the corner of Wyckoff and Willoughby Avenues, is a 35-vendor alternative to the flea stalls in Williamsburg and Fort Greene. Here, founder (and vendor) Rob Abner on a few highlights.



"I sell a ton of **Royal and Remington typewriters** (from \$100) from the early 1900s. I know how to clean them when the keys are sticky, so they're all in working condition."



"This **antique pine tool chest** (\$600) dates back to the late 1800s. Rustic Roots, out of Newburgh, sandblasts and clear-coats vintage trunks, and this one is coffee-table size."



"NicFit Vintage carries your standard polyester 1970s sundresses, but their specialty is vintage band T-shirts. This **Madonna T-shirt** (\$90) is for her 1992 album *Erotica*."



"This is an **overdyed Turkish rug** from Orientalist Home (\$500). They are based in Manhattan and specialize in antique rugs from Persia and Uzbekistan, plus pillows."



"**Superette Cold Brew** is a brand-new soda company out of Bushwick. They make a caffeinated drink (\$4) using bases like hibiscus and ginger root."

## 2x2

### ➔ Acrylic Tables

Going clear.

#### NEUTRAL

#### COLORFUL

SIDE



**Akbar table**, \$3,080 at Donghia, 979 Third Ave., Ste. 700.



**Kartell Max-Beam table**, \$360 at allmodern.com.

COFFEE



**Agra table**, \$2,668 at Plexi-Craft, 30-02 48th Ave., Long Island City.



**Sledge acrylic table**, \$14,000 at alexandravonfuerstenberg.com.

## BARGAINS

From uptown to the outer-boroughs, from sectional couches to sneakers, the city is in the midst of an **outlet renaissance**.

Eighty percent off bra-size bikinis at the three-month-old **Malia Mills Outlet** in Cobble Hill (375 Atlantic Ave.).

From 20 percent off Hyperdunks at the just-opened **Nike Factory Store** in Flushing (4024 College Point Blvd.).

Fifty percent off Alexis Bittar and Michael Kors at the five-month-old **Neiman Marcus Last Call** in Brooklyn Heights (210 Joralemon St.).

Seventy percent off Bonn bar stools at year-old **BoConcept Outlet** in Flushing (136-20 38th Ave.).

Twenty percent off Noguchi coffee tables at the **Design Within Reach Outlet**, opening in April in Industry City (219 36th St.).

Discounts TBD on Calvin Klein blazers and Aqua metallic jumpsuits at the **Bloomingdale's Outlet** (2085 Broadway), coming in fall.



**STERLING INFINITY,**  
*Musician*
**I'm guessing Infinity is not your given name?**

No. Sterling is my real first name, but when I was in Barcelona, this woman on the street came up to me and was like, "I love you," and I said, "But you don't know me!" She said, "Love is infinite and never dies." That stayed with me, and then when my father was about to pass away, he told me I should be Sterling Infinity.

**Where are you from?**

A small town in Illinois. I was the youngest of six, and we were in a traveling gospel band. My dad thought he was Joe Jackson—I was the youngest, so I was Michael. I was homeschooled and wasn't allowed to watch TV or listen to secular music. We toured throughout the U.S., and when I was 17, we came to New York, played a show at the Hilton, and I got a production deal. I decided to leave the band. My siblings were really mad, and my father didn't speak to me for two years.

**So then what?** After that, I traveled the world. I met a flamethrower in Nicaragua, and we went to Europe. And I finally had life experience to write songs about. **INTERVIEW BY**  
 ALEXIS SWERDLOFF


**LIGHTNING ROUND**

**Age:** 28.

**Neighborhood:**  
 Upper West Side.

**Workout:** "I lift weights five times a week with a Russian trainer who told me, 'I make you big like stallion.'"

**Tattoos:** Five. "My mom and I just got matching roses on our thighs last week."

**Favorite museum:**  
 The Met.

**Favorite designer:**  
 Rick Owens.

**Fashion inspiration:**  
 "Tina Turner is my mother, and David Bowie is my father."



*SPRING TRAVEL 2015*

# This Is Why You Come Here





*A chef's tour of Santiago's latest seven-course tasting menus, a skateboarder's ride through the half-pipes of Tel Aviv, and ten other local experts on (the particularly happening corners of) where they're from.*

IT'S COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD that the best way to explore a new place is to go straight to the locals. For this, our annual spring-travel guide, we took that wisdom one step further, seeking out not just locals but local experts—those who are especially well versed in their cities' newest and most noteworthy scenes. For Lagos, a fashion designer walks us through the recent rush of concept shops. In suddenly delicious Santiago, a chef shows us all the inventive sea-urchin tarts and foraged-strawberry-infused cocktails to be had. And on the non-city front, we found a surfer from Oregon who'd gladly pick the swells of Cape Kiwanda over the California coast.

*The top of the  
55-story  
Marina Bay  
Sands  
in Singapore.*



01



Soo K. Chan, founding principal and design director of SCDA Architects

For full location details, see [nymag.com](http://nymag.com).

# An Architect's Singapore

*Army-base art centers and 55th-story infinity pools.*

“DESIGN EVOLVES so quickly in a small country like Singapore. It's more nimble, much more open to change and testing new ideas. Sustainable architecture plays a big role here; you can see it firsthand at **Gardens by the Bay**, the park on Marina Bay that was built in 2012, which is much more technologically advanced than our traditional British-style gardens. The old army barracks at **Dempsey Hill**, a retrofitted military base, are also worth a visit. Locals come here for the furniture shops, like **Timothy Oulton at Curio**, which stocks things like tables made from decommissioned Chinese fishing junks. About ten minutes south is **Gillman Barracks**, which opened a few years ago; it's an army base turned contemporary arts center with 17 galleries, including one from Hong Kong gallerist **Pearl Lam**. You can get a good sense of the scene at the **National Design Centre**—which I designed last year—in the **Bras Basah Bugis arts district**. The first-ever **Singapore Design Week** was held here last March. Your trip wouldn't be complete without experiencing **Moshe Safdie's Marina Bay Sands**, three 55-story towers overlooking Marina Bay, bridged together by a park in the sky and its famous infinity pool.” *As told to Monica Kim*

## His Other Musts

### HOTEL

“The **Fullerton Bay Hotel** (from \$381; [fullertonbayhotel.com](http://fullertonbayhotel.com)) in the central business district is a glass box on the bay. All rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the water.”

### RESTAURANT

“**True Blue Cuisine** (49 Armenian St.; 65-6440-0449) serves Peranakan or Straits

Chinese fare: a blend of Chinese food with spices and techniques from Indonesia. Order the ayam buah keluak, or chicken with nuts, and Peranakan pastries like pineapple tarts.”

### CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

“Next to the Raffles Hotel, **Front Row** (328 N. Bridge Rd.; 65-6224-5501) is a concept store that stocks local designers like Laark and

international brands like Christophe Lemaire that are displayed alongside art installations of leaping deer.”

### DAY TRIP

“Drive nearly three hours north to **Malacca**, a Malaysian town that was colonized by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British. Head to **Jonker Street**, a closed-off road with food and trinket stands; grab some fried-

egg ice cream to go.”

### MUSEUM

“I prefer the **Asian Civilisations Museum** (1 Empress Palace; 65-6332-7798) to the National Museum. Located in a former civic colonial building, it details the history of Singapore's immigrants and pan-Asian art, from bronze Buddhist statues to Sumatran Batak wood carvings.”



The gastropub Saemundur i Sparifötunum.

02



Gunnar Karl Gíslason, founder of Foss Distillery and owner-chef of Dill restaurant

# A Booze-Maker's Reykjavik

*Circus beer bars and beetroot-infused bourbon.*

“NOW THAT WE'RE recovering from the financial crisis, Reykjavik's bar scene is exploding with regional beer bars and new cocktail spots infusing local spirits with native herbs. **Saemundur i Sparifötunum** is a brightly lit gastropub on

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANTHONY BACIGALUPO (REYKJAVIK); GRANT HARDER (SPAIN)





Early morning in Gipuzkoa, Spain.

## A Biker's Basque Country

03



Aitor Molina,  
creative  
director of  
*Pedallier*  
magazine

“BIKING IN the Basque country has a long tradition—going back to my grandfather’s day. But lately, we’ve seen the number of visiting cyclists grow so much that two local bike shops—**Kili** and **Basque MTB**—actually launched a tour company this year. For a challenging ride that’s a favorite of the 20 or so Tour de France riders who now live around here, start in the middle of the **Bay of La Concha** in **San Sebastián**, and follow the left side of the coast to reach a steep hill called **Igueldo**—the last climb of the **Clásica San Sebastián**. We always pause along the way at places that are used to taking care of cyclists: Just past Igueldo, stop at Buenavista and get the Spanish ham croquettes and sip a glass of Rioja by the sea. From there, avoid the main roads—there are plenty of good gravel roads—and hug the coastline for about 15 miles. You’ll pass the fishing village of **Getaria**, birthplace of Cristóbal Balenciaga, and **Tramo Litoral Deba-Zumaia**, a national park with moss-covered cliffs, before returning to the city. For a more leisurely ride, head right from the Bay of La Concha and bike about 15 miles to cross the border into France, pausing at **Bar O’romeral** for the best octopus on Earth. Cycle past the port town of **Saint-Jean-de-Luz**, then loop through the pastoral Pyrénées foothills, surrounded by plane trees and wildflowers.”

*As told to M.K.*

the second floor of the Kex hostel, a converted biscuit factory. It’s located near the waterfront and has a nice variation of local and imported beers, plus this weird-ass barber chair in one corner offering cuts every Thursday. A brand-new branch of **Mikkeller & Friends**, from Copenhagen microbrewer Mikkeller, has 20 rotating beers on tap and circus-themed décor. For cocktails, go inside the quirky Marina hotel to **Slippbarinn**—the mixologist there, Ásgeir Már Björnsson, takes cocktails to the extreme, like this one he calls Nobody Beats the Beets, where he mixes bourbon with beetroot juice plus blackberries and licorice. And for late-night drinking, especially if you don’t want to go clubbing, the owners of **Ölstofan** brew their own beer, and they named one pilsner Brió, after a regular who would describe himself as ‘brió’ whenever he was feeling tipsy.” *As told to Nicholas Gill*

### HOTEL

“The **101 Hotel** (from \$440; 101hotel.is; 354-580-0101) is right across the street from my restaurant, and I sometimes go there to relax and escape the chaos of the kitchen. I just love how they organize the books and papers, their beautiful lounge with a fireplace, and the down-to-earth food in the restaurant.”

### LOCAL RESTAURANT

“I have a favorite restaurant for every part of the day. For breakfast I go to **Grái Kötturinn** (Hverfisgata 16A; 354-551-1544), a.k.a.

the Gray Cat, for pancakes, bacon, coffee, and the all-around great atmosphere. For lunch, **Matur og Drykkur** (Grandagarður 2; 354-571-8877) creates new recipes from old recipes. The last time I was there, I had these cod heads that were marinated and glazed in fish stock and seaweed, then grilled. For dinner, I head to **Snaps** (Þórsgata 1; 354-511-6677), a friend’s bistro, which is outside of the main streets so mostly just locals know about it.”

### DAY TRIP

“Head about 40 minutes from downtown

to a freshwater lake within **Thingvellir National Park**, at **Silfra**, where you can snorkel or dive between the North American and Eurasian continental plates, plus spot strange geological formations and bright-green plants called troll hair. It’s like another world there with crystal-clear cold waters where you can see for hundreds of feet. Most snorkel and diving tours (five to six hours; dive.is; \$125 per person) will offer transportation.”

### TOURIST ATTRACTION

“Every tourist goes to the Blue Lagoon, but there are local pools all

over town with hot volcanic water being pumped in. I like the ones in the countryside because they haven’t been modernized, but **Sundlaug Vesturbæjarlaug** (Hofsvallagötu; 354-411-5150; \$4.75) is still very old-school and was designed by a famous Icelandic architect. There are four outdoor Jacuzzis, plus separate saunas for men and women. Go in the morning during the week, when they are less crowded, and remember to use the outdoor lockers—nothing fresher than that.”

### His Other Musts



Gadi Naor,  
owner of Noiz  
Skate Shop

## A Skateboarder's Tel Aviv

*Pre-Shabbat vibe sessions and pro skate parks.*

“THE BEAUTY OF the scene here is that as long as you're not skating on top of someone's head, you won't get harassed by cops. Back in the mid-2000s, big skate brands started sending their teams over here for film missions, and over time, the combination of that kind of exposure and social media have made the city a solid skating destination. One special street spot is **Golda**, the cultural center near the courthouse; it has curbs and heavy sets of stairs, and it's a big hangout spot for kids just learning how to skate, more-experienced riders, as well as the longboard-crew girls. The best day to grab a vibe session is on Friday afternoon before Shabbat, and you'll usually find the older guys skating and drinking beers. For a proper skate-park experience, head to **Galit**, which opened in 2007 in **Yad Eliyahu**. There's a pyramid and a huge wall on the left side that attracts pros like Pako, Itamar Kessler, and Noam “Jimmy” Be'er. Shops, including mine, will host competitions here. There's also the 18-year-old store **Lightwave**, run by Erez Levin, which has become a hub in central Tel Aviv. Kids have grown up there and gone on to become tattoo artists, musicians, prime ministers ... whatever.”

*As told to Abby Schreiber*

### His Other Musts

#### HOTEL

“**Hotel Montefiore** (from \$360; [hotelmontefiore.co.il](http://hotelmontefiore.co.il)) is located in an area famous for its preserved, all-white Bauhaus buildings. Inside, you'll find contemporary art by Israeli artists displayed in the rooms and hallways.”

#### LOCAL RESTAURANT

“The best burger in Tel Aviv is at **Vitrina**

(*Ibn Gabirol St. 54; 972-3-696-0304*). They also have excellent hot dogs and French fries, which are made with yam and potato and seasoned with spices and a bit of lemon.”

#### BAR

“I really like **Hunky-Dory** (*Ibn Gabirol 14; 972-54-832-9020*). They usually play a lot of alternative-rock

music, and their mojitos are great—and strong. You have one and then you're gone.”

#### CHOCOLATE SHOP

“Ibn Gabirol is a street known for having several chocolate shops, and my favorite is **Cardinal Chocolaterie** (*Ibn Gabirol St. 60; 972-3-695-8612*). Their passion-fruit truffles are perfect.”

#### NIGHTCLUB

“**Barby** (Derech Kibutz Galuyot 52; 972-3-518-8123) is an industrial-style club and music venue that can fit almost 1,000 people, where local and foreign bands play rock, punk, and reggae. You'll get everyone from Tel Aviv hipsters to rockers wearing black, military-style garb.”



*Dancers at Salone Margherita.*

## A Burlesque Dancer's Rome



Dixie Ramone,  
performer for  
Micca Club

“IN APRIL, ROME is going to get its own legal red-light district in **EUR**, a residential neighborhood south of Rome's historic center—this is already where all the prostitutes hang out. But overall, the nightlife scene is not very underground. Saturday at midnight, go to **Alchemy**, a party at this small, mirrored club called **Vicious**; they have DJs from around the world. After dancing, go to **The Jerry Thomas Project** speak-easy around 3 a.m. for the piano and fantastic cocktails. Before I go out, I like to skip the full dinner and go for drinks and meat and cheese at **Ai Tre Scalini**, an old spot in Monti, a neighborhood with a lot of bars. Or you can eat antipasti and drink at a burlesque show. I used to work for **Micca Club**, and even though the space shut down in 2013, the artistic director, Alessandro Casella, still hosts performances at venues like **Salone Margherita** in the **Piazza di Spagna**—it has 450 red velvet seats, including 32 for dinner. Not far from the red-light district, there's a lingerie shop called **ZouZou**—fancy and erotic.”

*As told to Julie Earle-Levine*





A skateboarder on the outskirts of Tel Aviv.

06



Rolando Ortega,  
chef and owner  
of Salvador  
Cocina y Café

## A Chef's Santiago

*Sea-urchin tart and carne mechada.*

“WE ARE A group of young chefs breaking into the scene, doing things our way. Santiago is no longer all wine and skiing while avoiding the Chilean food. There’s Carolina Bazán at the newly reopened **Ambrosia**, whose work is all about the local ingredients—like a sea-urchin tart. And chef Patricio Vergara runs **Come y Calla** in Barrio Italia; it’s a kind of underground restaurant that we call *puertas cerradas*, a clandestine eatery where you can only get a reservation through social media. His seven-course tasting menus include longaniza-crusted hake in a coconut curry sauce, and cocktails with hibiscus tea, vodka, and foraged sea strawberries. A lot of chefs stop to eat at **La Marita**, a stall inside the **La Vega Central** market. They have this sandwich with carne mechada (shredded roast) that’s smeared with avocado; it’s served on two just-fried sopaipillas.”

*As told to N.G.*

### His Other Musts

#### HOTEL

“**The Aubrey** (from \$195; [theaubrey.com](http://theaubrey.com)) is at the foot of Cerro San Cristóbal in Bellavista, Santiago’s bohemian neighborhood. It’s set in this house that was built in 1927 and has just 15 rooms, all distinctly decorated, and a great pool.”

#### NEIGHBORHOOD

“**Barrio Lastarria** is a neighborhood near the center of the city where antique stalls line some of the cobblestoned streets. I bought this incredible book about meat the other day for about \$8. There are also chic

hotels like the **Singular** and the **Centro Gabriela Mistral** cultural center, plus lots of art galleries and nice restaurants.”

#### DAY TRIP

“Thirty minutes from Santiago, the **Cajón del Maipo** is a river valley deep into the cordillera. It’s a great spot for nature and activities like hiking to glaciers, rock climbing, ice climbing, or horseback riding. The last time I went, I hiked three hours up to the **San José Volcano** and stayed at a mountain camp at the base, **Refugio Plantat**, which was built in 1937.”

07



María Riccetto,  
principal at  
the Ballet  
Nacional Sodre

## A Ballerina's Montevideo

Romeo & Juliet *and youth orchestras.*

“I MOVED BACK to Uruguay a few years ago, after having lived in New York for almost 14 years. Every time I would come back, I saw how the city was changing. It's not like ten years ago, when, if you wanted to go to the theater, you'd have to cross the river to Buenos Aires. The **Teatro Solís** is the oldest theater—it reopened after almost a decade of renovations—and the **Auditorio Nacional del Sodre** opened in 2009, which is where the Ballet Nacional is based. We're really the only major dance company here—now that Julio Bocca has taken over, our repertory has expanded a lot; this season I'll be dancing Juliet in *Romeo & Juliet*. But there's this up-and-coming choreographer, Martin Inthamoussu, who's always putting on shows for his **Compañía de Danza** at this small theater, **Sala Verdi**. All my dancer friends live around the theater, in the Centro, so we mostly hang out at this bar **Bluzz Live**; in the summer, everyone spills out onto the street. Though my schedule is tight, I'll do my best to hear classical music. The **Orquesta Juvenil**, the national youth orchestra, just played one of my favorite pieces, Ravel's *Bolero*, at the Sodre, and it was fantastic—you could really feel their energy.” *As told to Rebecca Milzoff*

### Her Other Musts

#### HOTEL

“The **Don Boutique Hotel** (from \$100; [donhotel.com.uy](http://donhotel.com.uy)), in Ciudad Vieja, located right in front of the Mercado del Puerto, only has a few rooms but is really nicely designed; it's modern and minimalist, and it has a great rooftop pool.”

#### CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

“When I have a big

event, I'll get something at Carolina Criado's boutique, **Caro Criado** (Carlos Sáez 6695). This season, her clothes had a huge American West influence, and last season she brought a lot of interesting fabrics from India into her collection.”

#### SPECIAL-OCCASION RESTAURANT

“Take an easy \$1, 30-minute bus ride to **Burdeos** (end of

*Avenida General Artigas*; 598-95-243-012), a seafood restaurant in El Pinar, located alongside a river. The last time I was there, I had a shrimp the size of my hand!”

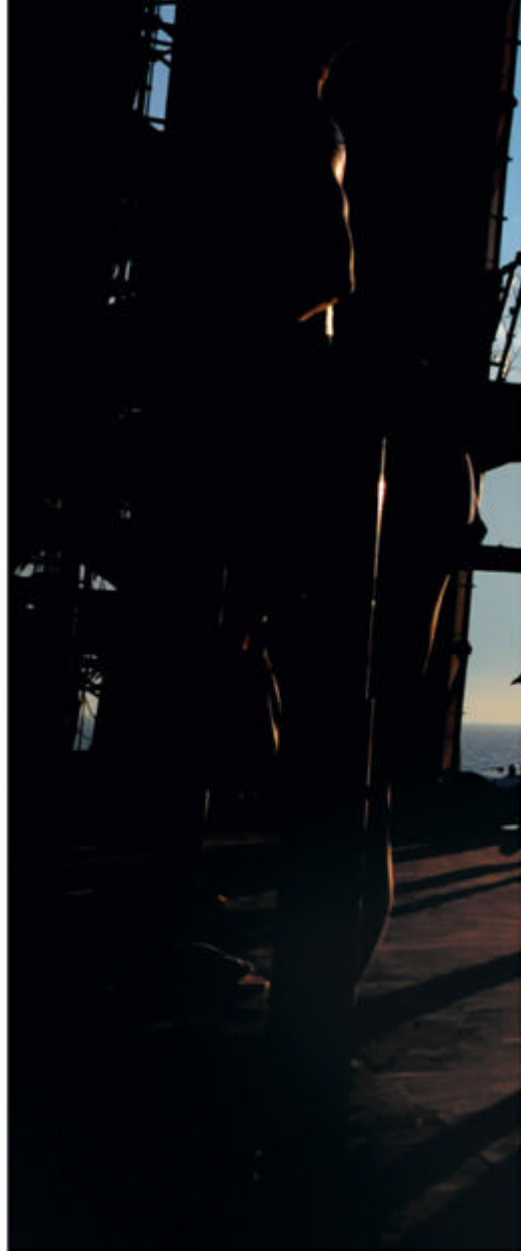
#### DAY TRIP

“**Colonia**, a two-and-a-half-hour drive, is this quiet, older city with a basilica, run-down streets, and these beautiful river beaches. My boyfriend and I just

rented a little house there just for the weekend.”

#### SOCCER STADIUM

“Try to see a game at the **Estadio Centenario** (in the *Parque Batlle*, nr. *Avenida Dr. Américo Ricaldoni*), where the first World Cup was played in 1930. Even if there's no game, it's worth a visit for the museum with historic photos and old uniforms, plus you can take a tour.”



08



Lana Cavar,  
design director for  
the Croatian  
National Theater

## A Designer's Zagreb

All-white lamp shops and socialist-modernist patio bars.

“IN THE 15 YEARS or so since Yugoslavia fell apart, Zagreb has gradually become known for its small-batch furniture, influenced by the mid-century modernism of the socialism era. I love the recent boomlet of design-related spots on tree-lined **Dežmanov Prolaz**. Highlights include **Love, Ana**, the all-white studio-store of Ana Tevšić, whose signature is her portable, copper-topped beechwood lamps; a pair of artsy café-bars called **Velvet**, one painted light gray, the other dark gray, by Zagreb's famous florist and interior decorator Saša Šekoranja. A stroll east of Zagreb's central **Ban Jelacic Square** is the **Croatian Design Superstore**, which features about 150 Croatian designers. The designers themselves hang out at **Potepuh**, one of the last public spaces with 1960s low-back armchairs by Bernardo Bernardi. It's great for day drinking on the patio.” *As told to Anja Mutic*

### Her Other Musts

#### HOTEL

“**Studio Kairos** (from \$58 a night; [studio-kairos.com](http://studio-kairos.com)) is a four-room B&B, a quickie tram or bike ride east of Ban Jelacic Square. I hear the homemade jams they serve are delicious.”

#### FOOD MARKET

“**Dolac** is Zagreb's main food market, dating back to the 1930s. Look for the sir i vrhnje (cottage cheese and cream) and local corn bread.”

#### CLOTHING STORE

“Call ahead for a visit to **Little Horse and Baby Beuys** (Tomiceva 7; 99-355-3095), the

studio of the Mujicic sisters, hidden in the back of a courtyard by the funicular. Their children's toys and clothing are handcrafted with Japanese silk and vintage buttons made of porcelain and seashells.”

#### MUSEUM

“I love the **Technical Museum** (Savska 18; 1-4844-050) for its mid-century industrial vibe and its ephemeral feel. At the Nikola Tesla Cabinet, you can test out some of the inventor's experiments, and the planetarium simulates the night skies from the North Pole to the Equator.”





*Warming up by the Río de la Plata.*



*Surfers at Cannon Beach.*

09

## A Surfer's Northern Oregon



**Michael Hall,**  
owner of  
**Blackfern**  
Surfboards

"WHEN I TELL people I make surfboards, they say, 'People surf in Oregon?' It's a less mature sport here, but in the last ten years, it's picked up momentum. Oregon is a lot more accessible than California, where you can be instantly intimidated by the caliber of surfing. Plus, all of our surf spots are in state parks, so you're looking at Sitka spruce trees instead of houses. Spring typically has the most magical days—fun-size waves with favorable offshore winds. **Indian Beach in Ecola State Park** is a couple miles' drive north of Cannon Beach; the parking lot's small, so it never gets too crowded.

On your drive back, head to **Bill's Tavern and Brew House** for a post-surf burger, and stay the night at **Tolovana Inn** (from \$72), which has oceanfront suites. For more powerful waves, head south to **Pacific City**, home to a surf spot called **Cape Kiwanda**. Right on the beach, **Pelican Pub & Brewery** is always crawling with surfers heading to their hot-water outdoor shower—a hot shower in your wetsuit is magic."

*As told to M.K.*



Ceridwen Dovey,  
whose most recent story  
collection is called  
*Only the Animals*

## An Author's Sydney

*Writer fests on Walsh Bay and literary walks along Bondi Beach.*

“SYDNEY HAS ALWAYS been seen as culturally inferior to Melbourne, but it's become a real literary destination in recent years. The **Sydney Writers' Festival** is May 18 to 24, with James Patterson headlining, but its events are year-round across Sydney, from Blacktown to Hornsby to Parramatta, which has a thriving arts scene. The festival hub is at **Walsh Bay**, also home to the **Sydney Theater Company**, around the corner from the **Harbour Bridge**. Last year, there were deck chairs where you could look out across the refurbished piers to the water. **Gleebooks** keeps with the area's hippie roots, with a cozy upstairs room for readings by local authors like the beloved memoirist Patti Miller and the biographer Kate Grenville. I love the recently launched **Giant Dwarf** theater for live events with writers and comedians. Not long ago I saw Russian-American journalist Masha Gessen there, talking about her new book on Pussy Riot. You can also create your own **literary coastal walk**: Start at Bondi Beach and walk along the ocean path built into the sandstone cliffs. Between **Bronte Beach** and the **Clovelly** inlet, **Waverley Cemetery** houses graves of Australian authors including Henry Lawson and Dorothea Mackellar—and has some of the best views of the ocean.”

*As told to Julie Earle-Levine*

### Her Other Musts

#### HOTEL

“**QT Sydney** (from \$295 a night; [qtsydney.com.au](http://qtsydney.com.au)) opened in 2012 in a historic building beside and above the State Theater on George Street, right in the center of the city. The décor pays tribute to the site's heritage, with artwork such as

a vintage wall created from old office objects found on-site. Even the staff stay in character in pin-striped suits and red bobbed wigs.”

#### SPECIAL-OCCASION RESTAURANT

“**Mr. Wong** (3 Bridge Ln.; 9240-3000) is a huge split-level

restaurant, but you have to search down an alley to find the entrance. They make a really good old-fashioned, and the Cantonese-style menu is extensive. Don't miss the whole duck (\$60).”

#### SECONDHAND SHOP

“At **Vinnie's** (St. Vincent de Paul Stores;

6202-1200), you have to go and ‘fossick for gold’ among the duds, but recently I found a short beaded wedding dress in '20s flapper style that I'm saving for a special occasion, and a teapot quite skillfully painted with a skull and crossbones.”



*Posing on the beach.*

## 11

## A Yogi's San Juan Del Sur



Yaosca Jiménez,  
owner of the  
yoga-inspired  
Turquesa  
Boutique

“SAN JUAN DEL SUR was largely unknown outside Nicaragua until it became a surf town in the '90s, after the civil war. I took my first class with an expat named Vanessa Pattison about ten years ago. Since then, the yoga culture has grown so fast, as has the health and wellness scene. In 2011, Vanessa opened our first yoga studio, **Zen Yoga**, which specializes in Vinyasa. It's off the main plaza; you enter through these bamboo gates into a garden full of tropical plants. The restaurant next door, **Buddha's Garden**, is the best one in town, and so healthy—try the Zen sandwich with flax bread. There's also **Simon Says**, which was a smoothie bar opened by an Argentine couple; it's now so popular that they just expanded it into a full-on restaurant. I'll sometimes bike to **Nica Yoga**, which is about three miles outside of town. It has these beautiful open-air studios and hosts retreats. Every meal is locally sourced—and you can even buy organic sunblock and toothpaste at their shop.”

*As told to Jayme Moyer*





The crowd at Walsh Bay for the Sydney Writers' Festival.

12



Lisa Folawiyo,  
owner and designer  
of her eponymous  
womenswear label

## A Fashion Designer's Lagos

*Batik pillows and vintage Yohji Yamamoto.*

“IT'S NOT THAT Lagosians are consumed by fashion, but the way you present yourself is important here. As people like Suzy Menkes have been coming to **Lagos Fashion Week** and more Nigerian designers like myself are showing their collections abroad, that's gotten a lot of young people to join the industry. I like to go to the **Nike Center for Art & Culture** for inspiration; it has an incredible collection of traditional African textiles. As for actual shops, my sister-in-law just opened **Alara**, where you can get stacked Mami wedges or cropped Loza Maléombho vests. **Temple Muse** was one of the first boutiques to offer that mix of local and foreign brands: batik pillows and Assouline books. **Stranger Lagos** skews younger; besides the vintage Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto, and local lines like Orange Culture, they sell coffee, so people are always just hanging out.” *As told to Zandile Blay*

### Her Other Musts

#### HOTEL

“**The Wheatbaker Hotel** (from \$513; 234-277-3560) is on this quiet street in Ikoyi—a calm oasis in Lagos. I always head straight for their lunch buffet and the efo riro—a rich vegetable soup.”

#### LOCAL RESTAURANT

“For the best traditional seafood-okra soup and pounded yams, go to **LAfric** (1 Adeola Hopewell St.; 803-302-7071). On Sundays, it's full of families for after-church brunch.”

#### BAR

“On most nights, we all end up at **Miliki** (7b Etim Inyang Crescent), a bar

that really transports you to the '60s with African high-life music and old concert posters.”

#### MARKET

“At the **Lekki Market**, you can find beads, wood sculptures, and pottery. I love their selection of small leather goods. Just remember, you have to haggle—here they call it ‘pricing.’”

#### MUSEUM

“Nigerian explorer Dr. Newton Jibunoh honored his late sister with the **Didi Museum** (175 Akin Adesola St.; 709-850-5052). It's got family mementos, plus a great collection of modern African art.”





The Polo Bar

## Polo Grounds

The food is simple at the Polo Bar.  
Getting in's the hard part.

BY ADAM PLATT

**M**ANY WEEKS AGO, when I first attempted to secure a table at Ralph Lauren's Polo Bar restaurant, which opened recently behind the flagship department store on Fifth Avenue, the friendly, grimly insistent voice on the other end of the line informed me that the next table wouldn't be available for several weeks. When I asked for a reservation for four on that distant date, I was told that the best she could offer was a table for two. When I asked for a table for two at 6:30, the voice said the best she could do was five o'clock. Which is how I found myself dining with one slightly befuddled guest at an hour when most culinarily conscious New Yorkers are planning their cocktail hour or finishing their afternoon tea. My guest looked around the mahogany-toned room, which was predictably deserted, except for some people taking selfies in a distant banquette. "What the hell is this place?" he whispered.

The idea of a Ralph Lauren restaurant is not as bizarre as it sounds, of course. There is a popular Ralph's in Paris (famous for its towering American cheeseburger) and an RL in Chicago, from which much of the look of the New

York operation, and a good deal of the cooking expertise, derives. This latest Lauren dining outlet features a cozy, railroad-car-size barroom at street level, where the door is manned by a gauntlet of smiling gatekeepers waving reservation lists. Presumably as at the other restaurants, the wood-paneled walls of this little bar are encrusted with reproductions of jockey photos and horse portraits, like a Disney version of a London sporting club. While you cool your heels waiting for a table to clear downstairs, you can enjoy a selection of nicely crafted cocktails, many of them served in glasses as heavy as fishbowls and stuck with little swizzle sticks shaped like polo mallets.

The subterranean dining room, which you reach via a lacquered-wood, *Downton Abbey*-esque staircase, is appointed in a similar, relentlessly themed way. Real-live polo mallets hang by the coat-check area, along with a tangle of random saddles and helmets. The comfortable leather banquettes that run around the edge of the beamy space are the color of butter-scotch and plumped with the kind of ye-olde tartan pillows that you'll see scattered all around the showrooms upstairs.

The smiling hostesses are kitted out in Ralph Lauren products; the walls are decorated with hundreds of other horse-centric photos and tchotchkes; and in case you forget where you are for a second or two, the sturdy, steakhouse-style plates on every table are emblazoned with THE POLO BAR in the familiar blocky company typeface, just above the great man's name.

The professionally executed, middle-of-the-road menu at the Polo Bar strains for a similar ye-olde clubby sense of occasion, and my first thought, after guzzling a \$21 old-fashioned, was that it could be an awful lot worse. Instead of the usual bread basket, waiters serve hot, chewy popovers crusted with Gruyère cheese, and while you wait for dinner to arrive, you can snack on a bar menu that includes a fine gourmet version of pigs in a blanket with a pot of whole-grain mustard on the side. The seasonally appropriate butternut-squash soup I tasted was thick and as sweet as carrot cake, but my guest had nothing unkind to say about the bountiful helping of kale Caesar salad we shared, or his appetizer bowl of suspiciously smooth "Ranch House" chili, which the kitchen smothers in melted Cheddar and butters with a fresh-baked biscuit laced with Pecorino cheese.

On another visit to the Polo Bar (with people who knew people and managed to procure a table at a more civilized time), I sampled other familiar specialties, like Dover sole (beautifully plated but a touch overcooked); a well-charred though less-than-mind-blowing bone-in \$55 rib eye; and a tasty, diligently pounded veal chop spackled with bread crumbs and served with some shaved-fennel salad piled

★  
The Polo Bar  
1 E. 55th St.,  
nr. Fifth Ave.  
212-207-8562

★★★★ ETHEREAL

★★★★ EXCEPTIONAL

★★★ EXCELLENT

★★ VERY GOOD

★ GOOD

NO STARS NOT RECOMMENDED

PHOTOGRAPH BY TIRZAH BROTT/NEW YORK MAGAZINE

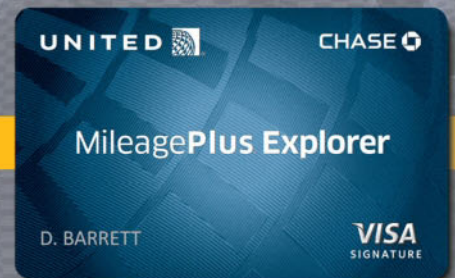


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## Von Kava's Tasting Menu

Jonathan Kava has worked the stoves for Blue Hill at Stone Barns, Daniel, and Mas (farmhouse). One drawback to cooking in such posh kitchens: You never get a chance to meet your public. "The only interaction you have with customers," says Kava, "is if somebody sends something back." To remedy that situation, Kava has come up with an inspired solution: bringing fine dining to Brooklyn's open-air Smorgasburg with his Von Kava tasting-menu table (five courses that change weekly). The table can only accommodate eight alfresco fine diners at a time, but you can opt to take the entire meal on a compostable tray and repair to a picnic bench, curb, lawn, water taxi, what have you. R.R. & R.P.

Saturdays  
and Sundays at  
**Smorgasburg**, \$15;  
smorgasburg.com

on top. The decorative Polo Bar burger (a tower of bacon, Cheddar, and potato bun) is serviceable as haute burgers go, although if you're in the mood for a dose of comfort after elbowing your way through the riotous boutiques along Fifth Avenue, I suggest the roast chicken (with generous pools of gravy and a buttery mound of mashed potatoes), or Ralph's corned-beef sandwich, which is a kind of glorified midtown Reuben served with a great twirl of fries in a silver cup.

The Polo Bar is currently being bull-rushed by A-list names (Tom Hanks, Woody Allen, Allison Williams). I never glimpsed any megawatt celebrities during my meals there, although, according to my spies, Maria Bartiromo turned up not long after we'd called for our check one night, along with David Lauren, who ate his dinner at a discreet four-top by the wall, with his back to the room. There's a small but decently curated selection of mostly local craft beers at this Ralph Lauren restaurant, and one wine geek I dined with declared the prices on the predictably trophy-heavy list (there are 31 Champagnes available, and about half of the 40 California Cabernets cost over \$300) to be "high but not unfair." The relentlessly comforting, mostly premade desserts include a variety of cake and pie wedges (apple, five-layer chocolate, bourbon-laced pecan), but the one to get is the brand-approved Polo Bar brownie, which contains a little bit of everything (nuts, vanilla, chocolate) all on one plate.

### SCRATCHPAD

One star for the solid menu and another for the professional service and the buzzy sense of occasion. Minus a star for the exhausting, fraught hassle of getting in.

### BITES

**IDEAL MEAL:** Kale Caesar, roast chicken or Ralph's corned-beef sandwich with fries, Polo Bar brownie. **NOTE:** To get a drink at the bar upstairs at this early stage, you'll also need a reservation. **HOURS:** Opens 5 p.m. daily. **PRICES:** Appetizers, \$12 to \$24; entrees, \$22 to \$55.

*Classic roast-chicken double consommé is amped up with carrot juice that's been infused with habaneros, thickened with cream, and shot out of an iSi gourmet whipper.*

*A veggie riff on the classic bistro dish, Kava's salsify marrow bone is a blanched and hollowed-out root sprinkled with dehydrated black olive.*

*For dessert: a rhubarb-infused marshmallow petit four.*

*Lightly cured sockeye salmon, smoked cabbage, yogurt, and pastrami-spice glaze. Yes, the yogurt is housemade ... in an immersion circulator for 24 hours.*

*The pork in the peppered pork loin (served with brown-butter Hubbard squash and Brussels sprouts) comes from contented heritage-breed pigs raised upstate.*





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# Homesick No More

New York's Tex-Mex might finally get its due.

BY ROBIN RAISFELD AND ROB PATRONITE



IF THERE IS a single most misunderstood cuisine in the culinary melting pot that is New York, it might be Tex-Mex—or at least that's the impression you get after hearing the laments of expats hungering for a properly sauced enchilada, an authentic chile con queso, or that Holy Grail the breakfast taco. “The last time I ate Tex-Mex was in 2000,” says Fort Worth native Michael Ginsberg, who still sounds scarred by the experience. “The sauce tasted like marinara.” Lisa Fain, Dallas-born cookbook writer and founder of [homesicktexas.com](http://homesicktexas.com), the blog that spawned two cookbooks, sounds equally traumatized. “In the late '90s,” she recalls, “I had chile con queso that tasted like Swiss cheese!” To ensure that that cruel fate never befalls another unsuspecting New Yorker, Ginsberg and Fain, along with Austinite Paul Oveisi, have teamed up to open **El Original**, a 7,500-square-foot ode to the food of their childhoods.

Their timing couldn't be better: A Lone Star State consciousness has begun permeating the foodscape, like ancho-chile heat in a bowl of (bean-less!) Texas red, from brisket-centric barbecue joints like BrisketTown and Morgan's, to Tex-Mex-icized Chipotle clones like Tres Carnes and El Vez Burrito, to, most recently, Javelina in the Flatiron District, which covers

much of the same regional-Texan territory as El Original. Even the Italian restaurant L'Apicio, whose kitchen is helmed by Texas native Gabe Thompson, recently got in on the trend with a one-off Tex-Mex brunch that included breakfast tacos, steak fajitas, and Frito pie.

But none of these establishments have El Original's secret weapon: the culinary scholarship and time-tested recipes of Fain, whom Ginsberg and Oveisi call their head flavor consultant and hold in the kind of esteem that Italophiles hold Marcella Hazan. She's written the menu and trained the crew in the intricacies of a diverse cuisine that might be easier to define not by what it is but by what it is not: “Chimichangas are not Tex-Mex,” says Fain. “Burritos are not Tex-Mex.” At El Original, which occupies a massive Hell's Kitchen space adjacent to the Skyline Hotel, you'll find three textures of taco (soft, crispy, and puffy, pictured), Dickson's locavore lard in the refried beans and flour tortillas, and individually garnished nachos, more dainty canapé than corn-chip chaos. There are multiple combination plates, drinks devised by cocktail consultants the Tippling Brothers and local beers on tap, and largely reclaimed décor that aims for coziness over kitsch. But El Original isn't meant to be Houston on the Hudson. “We want our accuracy to be in our food,” says Ginsberg. ➤ 735 Tenth Ave., nr. 50th St.; 917-382-5512





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# Manousheh

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347-971-5778



**O**F ALL THE slice joints that line Bleecker Street and its environs, one of them is not like the rest. Manousheh is a pizzeria of sorts by way of Beirut, named for the flatbread with which the Lebanese start their day. The disks are baked to order and topped six ways (eight if you count halvah and Nutella for dessert). The simplest is drizzled with olive oil and za'atar (the sublime spice blend of sesame seeds, sumac, and thyme that Middle Easterners dispense with abandon, like hipsters do with Sriracha). After a quick puffing up in a pizza oven, the za'atar-slicked dough is folded in half and served piping hot on a piece of parchment paper. The result is soft and tender with a hint of crispness and a toasty, herby fragrance that won't quit. You can also get your manousheh topped with za'atar and jibneh, a soft white cheese, or a veritable salad of avocado, tomato, cucumber, mint, and za'atar all rolled up like a newspaper. A much thinner, cracker-crisp version comes lightly spread with a paste of ground beef, tomato, and onion, not unlike the Turkish lahmacun (here it's called lahem bi ajine). Squeeze a wedge of lemon over it, shake on some aleppo pepper, and you're pretty much in manousheh heaven.



## Chevalier

20 W. 53rd St., nr. Fifth Ave.  
212-790-8869

IT MIGHT SEEM odd that a 250-year-old French crystal company would morph into a luxury-hotel brand. But that's what happened when Starwood Capital Group acquired Baccarat, the venerable producer of stemware, vases, and chandeliers, many of which are displayed throughout midtown's new Baccarat Hotel & Residences and its modern French restaurant, Chevalier, slated to open in mid-April. Charles Masson has brought his front-of-house finesse from La Grenouille, and chef Shea Gallante (of Ciano and Cru) reinterprets classics like duck breast with lavender and turnips (pictured). The charcuterie is made in-house, and pastry chef David Carmichael is baking his own baguettes and undertaking an old-school chocolate soufflé.



## Dimes

49 Canal St., nr. Orchard St.  
212-925-1300

DIMES' AMBITIONS WERE always bigger than its 18-seat East Chinatown premises: part healthy (but not "health food") restaurant, part New Age-y boutique, part brunch destination. Its move this month to a larger space nearby gains owners Alissa Wagner and Sabrina De Sousa not only additional seating but also a real gas-fired kitchen and full liquor license (wheatgrass margarita, anyone?). New menu additions include pitaya bowls (the dragonfruit alternative to açaí), matcha sesame sweet buns, and nori wraps (pictured), plus bar steaks and whole fish for dinner. R.R. & R.P.



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# The CUNY AGES

## The Honorable Judge Connick

Harry Connick Jr.  
managed to make  
*American Idol*  
fun again, by making  
it about ... music?

BY JESSICA PRESSLER

**S**O THIS WHERE I do ma writin’,” drawls Harry Connick Jr., pulling out a chair in front of the desk he keeps in his trailer, which is today parked facing an alley at the back of the State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Outside is a Springsteenian tableau of shuttered businesses splashed with dirty slush. Inside this clean, beige

man cave, it's a balmy Sunday morning, a perpetual jazz brunch.

Connick tinkles his computer's keyboard, pulling up the score for "I Concentrate on You," an old Cole Porter tune he'll perform later this evening for the jazz enthusiasts, big-band aficionados, and *American Idol* fans who will brave the cold to attend his show at the old Art Deco theater. But first he must fiddle with the arrangement, as has become his daily ritual. "I get bored singing the same songs every night," he explains, adding a staccato marking to the parts for brass section. "*Bidddeee-biddee baaaaap*," he scats. "*Bap!*"

He takes a slug out of the gallon of water he's been drinking to lube up his pipes. "So that's what I do all day," he says happily.

That Connick is here, nerding out over arrangements while his *Idol* co-stars Jennifer Lopez and Keith Urban are in Hollywood, undergoing the shellacking necessary to attend the Academy Awards, will come as no surprise to anyone who has gotten to know him on the past two seasons of the show.

At first when Connick stepped in to replace Randy Jackson and the human equivalent of two fistfuls of Valium on the *Idol* judges panel, it seemed like an odd choice for a show about finding the next big thing. After all, he wasn't like the other pop stars who've presided over that electric-blue bench. He's never had a drug addiction, started a feud, or made it clap in a music video. His face looks suspiciously as though he has never had a part of his butt injected into it. He makes family movies and music that moms like. He has an album called *When My Heart Finds Christmas*, for Pete's sake.

But then a funny thing happened. Connick's presence made the show good again. *American Idol* has always had a mean streak. It was born in the Age of Snark, propelled by Simon Cowell, whose cutting remarks powered its initial rise. For every talent it celebrated, *Idol* made laughingstocks of a dozen—on *SNL*, Rachel Dratch memorably parodied a contestant by caterwauling Whitney Houston with a tiny arm sprouting from her head—but was so successful in doing this for so long that producers appeared slow to notice when the cultural tides changed. Ratings for the show began to plummet several seasons ago.

Maybe Connick has something to do with the show scrapping these sorts of horror-show auditions, maybe not. But his arrival—first as a mentor who helped contestants prepare for performances, followed by his ascendance to the position of judge—seemed to have had the effect of a teacher entering the room. Everyone

stopped screwing around and started doing what they were supposed to, which is making a show about music.

And Connick knows music. He has ever since he was a kid and his parents, New Orleans muckety-mucks out of a John Grisham novel who also happened to own a record store, introduced him to the music of Miles Davis. He started playing the piano at 3, and by age 9 he was giving concerts alongside jazz legends.

Almost certainly, Harry Connick Jr. took the job on *Idol* mostly to make wads of cash and connect with a younger audience. But once seated in his chair, he assumed an air of deep authority. "My mother was a real judge," he tells me. "So I think a lot about what it means to be a judge, and I take it really very seriously." He called out his predecessor's catchall descriptor *pitchy* ("It's not a word") and gave viewers the proper names of the annoying ties contes-

**"I have no idea why you did that. It's silly ... Don't sing notes that are not in the chords."**

tants develop when they're showing off, with vocal gymnastics on *loooooooong no-oo-o-o-o-oooo-otes*. (They're called "runs" and "licks.") "I have no idea why you did that," he told one contestant bluntly after one such incident. "It's silly ... Don't sing notes that are not in the chords."

He educates himself on their song choices. "Like, if it's a Pink song, I'll make sure I know who wrote the song, the history of the people who wrote the song, Pink's history, the video, any other possible versions of the song, people's interpretations of the lyrics," he says. "And I develop my own interpretation of the lyrics, take pretty copious notes, and know just about everything there is to know, so when the person comes to sing that song, I'll know: Are they copying Pink? Or are they going back a step and looking at the lyrics and trying to build their own performance?"

Occasionally, he expounds on the finer points of music. "What's wrong with challenging America?" he asked Jennifer Lopez once when she tried to shush his explanation of the musical term *pentatonics*. Lopez was taken aback, but she probably didn't want to say on live TV "What's wrong is that the ratings on this show are terrible and pentatonics is probably not helping."

It's true that Connick's arrival hasn't reversed the show's fortunes, and he worries about how he's perceived. "I get a lot of people saying, 'You look so mean, you don't stand up and applaud,'" he says. "I don't clap, because, like, a bomb could go off in that theater and I wouldn't notice because I'm so deeply focused on what they're doing, which may mean I'm being moved to tears, or I'm not impressed at all, but I am laser-beam focusing."

This is not to say he can't have fun. Connick is an old-fashioned, capital-E Entertainer. On the show, he has a slapstickily homoerotic relationship with Urban and plays the ribbing older brother to Lopez, gently checking her privilege whenever she seems befuddled by references to things like doing the dishes or flying coach.

At age 47, Connick has grown into his looks the way a leather chair gets more comfortable with age. At 21, when Rob Reiner approached him to record the soundtrack to *When Harry Met Sally*, he was all blue eyes and baby face and dreamy baritone. Soon he was not only providing the soundtrack for rom-coms but starring in them (*Hope Floats*, *P.S. I Love You*). He married one of the original Victoria's Secret catalogue models, Jill Goodacre. But even after he went Hollywood, he didn't really go Hollywood, he says. "Like, I didn't go to parties," he says. "Not that I didn't want to." He just had something more enticing keeping him occupied. As long as his albums made money, the record company was giving him carte blanche to do what he wanted. "If I wanted to make a record with 30 violin players and a full woodwind section, I could," he says, still delighted just talking about it. "Like if you were a painter and somebody gave you infinite amounts of paint, and they just kept sliding it under the door every day, and they kept sliding brushes and canvases, you'd never leave the room." It was only a few years ago that he realized maybe he was missing a few things. Like popular music.

But he's getting to know that landscape—"I think Katy Perry's talented. I think Ariana Grande's talented." He's also traveling around the country with *Idol*, which has been eye-opening for him. "The people auditioning are kind of bereft of indigenous influence. Like, when we were in New Orleans, they could have been from anywhere. When you're sitting in your room somewhere in Idaho when you're influenced by Brazilian music, it's amazing, but what about the local stuff?" He takes another glug of his water. "But I guess that's what forces cultures to grow and change." He could be talking about his own run on *Idol* here. "You never know what's going to come out of it." ■



# NEW YORK

PROMOTIONS. EVENTS.  
FOOD. SHOPPING.  
ENTERTAINMENT. ART.

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Go Behind the Scenes of Neil LaBute's New Play *The Way We Get By* at Works & Process at the Guggenheim

May 3, 7:30 pm

In this new play about love and lust, the story of Beth and Doug unfolds the morning after one hot night following a drunken wedding reception. Tony-nominated playwright Neil LaBute and Tony-nominated director Leigh Silverman will participate in a moderated discussion. Excerpts will be performed at Works & Process prior to the New York premiere at Second Stage Theatre. Tickets still available.

► [worksandprocess.org](http://worksandprocess.org)

GUGGENHEIM  
WORKS & PROCESS



Photo: courtesy Second Stage Theatre



## TRAVEL

### The British Virgin Islands Summer FREEdom Celebrations

Spend your summer enjoying some of nature's best-kept secrets. The British Virgin Islands Summer FREEdom offers include unbelievable all-inclusive, chartered yacht, hotel and private island resort accommodations. Sailing and dive classes with select resorts are also being offered at special rates to help the novice prepare for the season's thrilling event line up of sailing regattas and diving excursions. Food fairs and plenty of exciting cultural festivals are also among the list of anticipated summer celebrations.

► [BVI Tourism.com/Summer](http://BVI Tourism.com/Summer)

## EVENT

### *Married at First Sight* Mixer

On March 12, A&E and *New York* co-hosted a blind date mixer for New York singles to get lucky in love. Using the matchmaking science behind the hit docu-series *Married at First Sight*, matchmaking experts Dr. Logan Levkoff, Dr. Joseph Cilona, and Greg Epstein gave singles a scientifically-proven chance to find "The One." One lucky couple was whisked away on an Ultimate First Date to Jamaica as part of the social experiment designed to see if science can determine when sparks will fly. *Married at First Sight* airs Tuesday nights at 9pm ET on A&E.

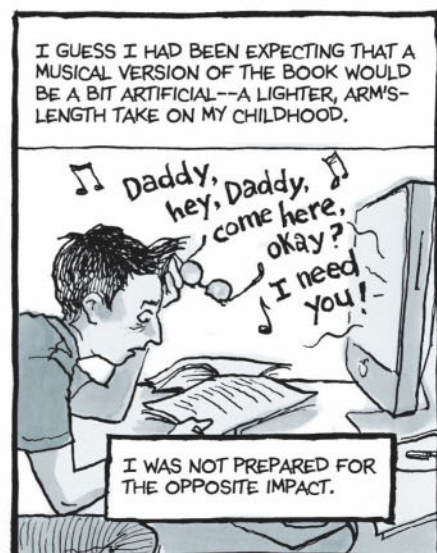
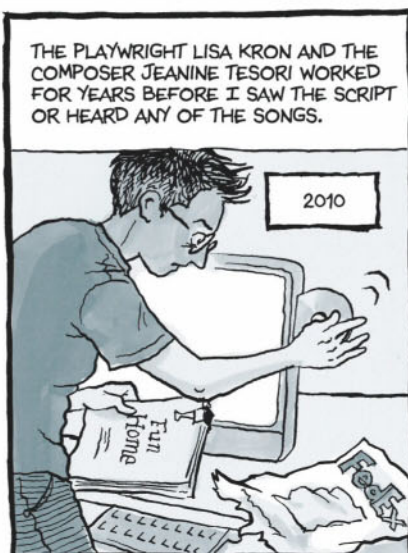
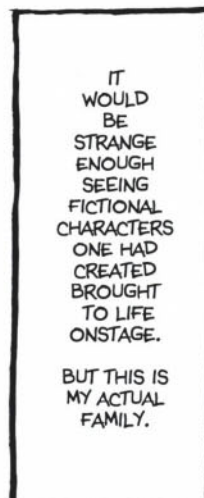
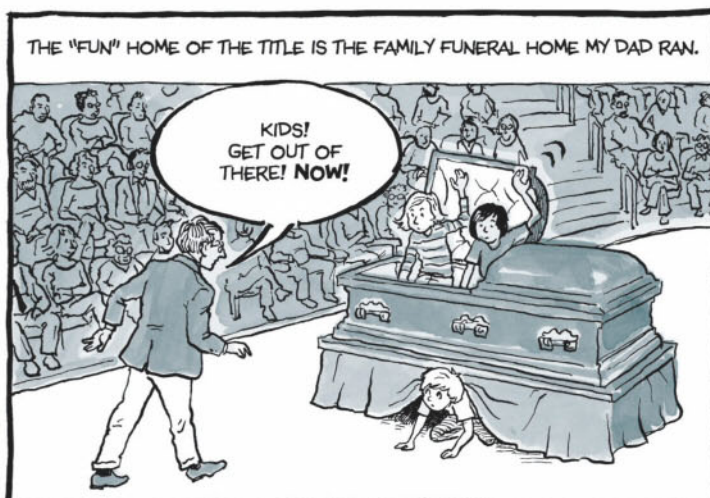
► [aetv.com/married-at-first-sight](http://aetv.com/married-at-first-sight)



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# ALISON BECHDEL DRAWS A CODA





Last year, her comic-book memoir *Fun Home* became an extraordinarily moving musical at the Public. To mark its transfer uptown to Circle in the Square (where it opens on April 19), we asked Bechdel about seeing herself, her parents, and their difficult relationship portrayed on a Broadway stage. Here's how she responded.





BOOKS

# "If No Men Read It, I Just Don't Care"

Heidi Julavits  
opens up her diary.

BY GENEVIEVE SMITH

**I** DON'T WANT to say I'm not a serious person, but I take my seriousness with a serious side of not very serious," says the writer Heidi Julavits. We are sitting in the wood-paneled dining room at Café Sabarsky, inside the Neue Galerie on Fifth Avenue, which she says is the one place she is most calm in New York. It's early March, warm in a way that feels like an advance of spring, and almost immediately after meeting her, I have a deeply unprofessional urge to try to make her my friend. Part of it is that she is dressed like a sophisticated urban Viking—camel-brown crewneck sweater tucked into a high-waisted orangey-brown sweater skirt over black jeans; the skull of a small mammal hangs on a leather strap around her neck. Part of it is the book she's just written, a memoir-as-diary, *The Folded Clock*, in which each entry begins with the

classic kid's-journal formation "Today I" and which may sound like a distant cousin of the recent string of fiction-but-not-really books (by Ben Lerner, Sheila Heti, Tao Lin) but reads more like Lydia Davis short stories, if Lydia Davis had a serious eBay habit and nursed elaborate fantasies about surviving a shipwreck (which she may—who can say?).

But the biggest part (which, really, is the mother of the other two parts) is how real-life Julavits, just like on-the-page Julavits, is the kind of conversational gymnast who can, in the course of one (admittedly long) lunch, somersault from a close reading of birth videos to an analysis of literary likability to a consideration of *The Breakfast Club*. She is especially compelling on "this conundrum of wanting to be taken seriously but not wanting to be a pompous ass," a conundrum, she points out, that is often particularly complicated for women; but also when talking about how best to transmit Important Lessons to one's children (ideally without actually having to have "a talk") and how

to stare down the threat of global extinction while still keeping a sense of humor. "There's a lot of mortality contemplation in this book," she says, breaking into a broad smile, "in an unserious, lighthearted manner. We'd never want to take mortality too seriously."

This is Julavits's fifth book, but she's still probably best known for founding, with a few co-conspirators more than a decade ago, the literary journal *The Believer*, which was designed to cultivate a bighearted and generous book culture as a kind of corrective to the sniping and brawling that had come to define book criticism (and define it, in the era of Dale Peck and pre-*New Yorker* James Wood, as macho, petty, and mean). Julavits wrote the first issue's foundational manifesto, a criticism of criticism that defended the ambitious literary novel, and has herself written a series of very novel-y novels (one about a plane hijacking, another about warring psychics). She also teaches fiction at Columbia and last year co-edited, with Heti and Leanne

Shapton, a mesmerizing anthology called *Women in Clothes*, a scrapbook of meditations on how women dress themselves that manages to be expansive enough to contain both reenactments of *Vogue* poses by Zosia Mamet and an interview with a human-rights journalist on "child-slave" garment workers.

In *The Folded Clock*, there is a lot of that same free-ranging, self-scrutinizing spirit. Gender, marriage, ambition, doubt, integrity, ethics, friendship, parenting all make their way into entries that are ostensibly about the kind of quotidian things that we might jot down in a journal: a dinner party, an errand, a lunch with a friend, a visit to a museum. The book can almost be read as an encyclopedia of Things Women Think About. (A is for adultery; B is for *The Bachelor*—or "The Franchise," as Julavits calls the reality series, which turns out to supply her with more fodder than you would have thought possible for a brainy 46-year-old novelist.)

Mostly, though, *The Folded Clock* feels like both a consideration of and an inoculation against the basic meh-ness of adulthood. In Julavits's rendering, the tedious grown-up chores, social obligations, and life-management tasks that, if we're honest, make up great swaths of our waking hours are coated in a sticky syrup of potential, or "associative possibilities," as she calls them. "Suddenly, you've got a kid or you've got two kids, and you have a job, and a decent percentage of your day is actually spent doing stuff that feels like it doesn't have a lot of value, right?" she says, sounding alarmingly chipper, then associatively dives into a story about a discussion of organic chemistry at a recent Columbia curriculum meeting. "We were talking about how can you make organic chemistry less boring and then we started to say, 'Maybe it's okay for organic chemistry to be boring. Maybe what needs to happen is people have to go into organic chemistry with a different attitude of how to make organic chemistry interesting to themselves,'" she says. "That's essentially what I was trying to do. I was seeing my life as an organic-chemistry course that I was trying to make more interesting to myself."

Take parenting. "Child-rearing is really boring," she says between bites of bratwurst and sauerkraut. "But I think the sense that's pushing on you a little bit is that even though you know that someday this person will call you once every four months, someday you're going to be in a position where this person barely thinks about you for weeks at a time, even though you know" (Continued on page 109)





# ART

## Would Peggy Olson Have Approved These?

Without their words, vintage ads starring women speak even more loudly.



IN THE YEAR of Barack Obama's election, the artist Hank Willis

Thomas created a project called "Unbranded: Reflections in Black by Corporate America, 1968–2008." It was made up of 82 magazine advertisements, two from each year, that showed or made reference to African-Americans—except that he'd stripped all the text out. Sans captions, the illustrations and photographs turned flat-out strange, and were uncannily revealing about the intentions and attitudes of the (mostly white) people who made those ads.

Starting April 10 at Jack Shainman Gallery, he'll show a follow-up project, "Unbranded: A Century of White Women, 1915–2015." Once again the images speak for themselves, as the original ads aren't on view or in the catalogue. The models are posed in just about every way you could put a woman in a corner: caged, dangled off cliffs, straddling all sorts of objects, straitjacketed. They're often funny—*can you believe that was considered okay?*—before they're not. But Thomas cautions us to avoid how-far-we've-come platitudes, in part because the ad images from the past few years aren't so progressive either. "Our values," he notes drily, "may be seen as pretty problematic to the next generation."

CHRISTOPHER BONANOS



◀ 1967

### House Rules!

Thomas says he was uneasy about using this photograph, which once advertised a line of pants called (of all things) Broomsticks. "I mean, this is not the kind of image I want associated with me." He adds that one recent viewer made a chilling observation: "At least she's smiling."

1951 ▶

### She's All Tied Up ... in a Poor System

After the war, the working women in these pictures shift from Rosie the Riveter jobs to secretarial work and the like, almost always in support of men. The boss goes unseen in this ad for business forms, "and she's being driven crazy by the workplace—but of course *he* isn't."







1981 ▲

***And They'll Treat You Good***

In this ad for Texas-brand boots, published in the era of "Who Shot J.R.?", the power dynamic was the thing. "Cowboy boots are part of being a man, and she's taking off the boot—she's in control. But she's riding it, and it's an extra-long leg. A *black leg*."





# PARTY LINES

Edited by Jennifer Vineyard

CHANEL PARIS-SALZBURG 2014-15 IN NEW YORK  
PARK AVENUE ARMORY, MARCH 31.

“Choupette is the most famous cat in the world, and the richest. She made €3 million last year. She has two personal maids. I don’t allow her to do food ads. She’s too sophisticated for that.” —Karl Lagerfeld



How should ‘Mad Men’ end?

Like *The Sopranos*, unless they reconnect him with his past somehow?



Robert Klein



Emma Myles

They get called out on the despicable things that people do.

Knocks on ex-wife’s door. She opens it, they look at each other. Curtain.



Chris Noth

OPENING NIGHT OF *THE HEIDI CHRONICLES*  
MUSIC BOX THEATRE, MARCH 19.

TANGENT

“Every time-travel movie you’ve ever seen is, ‘If I had it all to do over, I wouldn’t change anything.’ I remember my agent sent me the script for *Good Will Hunting* to direct, and I was like, ‘Who are these guys? Affleck and Damon? And why are they attached to this project? No, thank you!’ That. Maybe I’d change that.” —Ben Stiller



GLAAD AWARDS  
BEVERLY HILTON, BEVERLY HILLS, MARCH 21.

“When you start off with someone in a welding hat, drilling something, I know I’m in for a good ride. And if we see Channing Tatum, we will rip his clothes off tonight.” —Jessica St. Clair, on her reaction to the trailer for *Magic Mike XXL*



PHOTOGRAPH: STEFANIE KEENAN/GETTY (BEYONCÉ, LAGERFELD, VIERA-NEWTON)





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Photography by Brigitte Lacombe

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The CULTURE PAGES

## CRITICS

*Lindsay Zoladz on surprise albums ... David Edelstein on Clouds of Sils Maria ...  
Justin Davidson on On Behalf of Nature.*



POP / LINDSAY ZOLADZ

## When Everybody Pulls a Beyoncé

I have surprise-album fatigue.

ON A RECENT Wednesday evening, while I was idly flicking through Instagram, my heart skipped a beat for a distinctly modern reason: A pop star was about to release a new album out of nowhere. Or at least that's how I and many others first interpreted a cryptic image posted by Rihanna, which depicted the Barbados-born singer sporting chandelier earrings, greaser-slick hair, and haute-couture eyebrows that made her look like a portrait of Cara Delevingne painted by Frida Kahlo. It certainly looked like cover art, and she'd included the hashtags #R8 (the code name for her mysterious but definitely forthcoming eighth album) and #March26, the following day's date. For about 15 minutes on Twitter, the prayer-hand emoji were flying. But soon digital sleuths set the record straight: The actual URL of the image contained the phrase "BBHMM-Single-Art." Which meant all we were getting was a new Rihanna single. Sure enough, the sputtering trap-pop song "Bitch Better Have My Money" arrived the next day, to the kind of mixed reviews that are born of impossibly heightened hopes. The single had fallen victim to a very of-the-moment paradox: We have become so used to pop musicians surprising us with new albums that we now expect the unexpected.

Surprise, mystery, and minimalism are the rage right now when it comes to marketing pop albums, but until quite recently the pendulum was swinging in the opposite direction. There was a period a few years ago when labels and artists were focusing so heavily on the "album rollout" that they seemed to consider it a kind of performance art. The whole thing reached a nadir in the summer of 2013: Lady Gaga's comically excessive ARTPOP campaign featured a Jeff Koons sculpture and a press conference in which she unveiled "VOLANTIS, the world's first flying dress"; Daft Punk recorded endless VH1 *Classic Albums*-esque promotional spots that memorialized *Random Access Memories* before anybody had even heard it; Kanye West and Arcade Fire tried elaborate, street-art-inspired approaches that mostly backfired; and then who could forget Katy Perry driving through the streets of L.A. in a gilded 18-wheeler that screamed KATY PERRY PRISM 10-22-13 and looked, uncannily, like a ten-ton brick of



Cracker Barrel cheese? From the vantage of our current surprise-album era, these roll-out campaigns seem like the now-foreclosed mansions built right before the housing bubble burst.

Artists like Radiohead and David Bowie had previously toyed with secret recording sessions and unconventional release strategies, but the day the bubble truly burst was December 13, 2013—when Beyoncé “changed the game with that digital drop” (as she later put it in her guest verse on Nicki Minaj’s “Feeling Myself”) and released her blockbuster self-titled visual album with no prior promotion and, presumably, an entire rain forest’s worth of nondisclosure agreements. Music fans did not seem to miss the familiar grind of the album-promotion cycle: *Beyoncé* sold 828,773 copies in three days and became the fastest-selling album in the iTunes Store’s history.

Since then, any time another artist has released music in an even vaguely surprising way, it has been dubbed “pulling a Beyoncé,” but the joke is already old and the phrase misleading—the surprise album now comes in many shapes and sizes. Some artists have surprise-released previously announced material early to stay a step ahead of leaks (Björk’s *Vulnicura*; six of the songs on Madonna’s *Rebel Heart*; and, most recently, Kendrick Lamar’s *To Pimp a Butterfly*). Long-gone cult heroes have reappeared out of thin air and boosted their devil-may-care cred by releasing comeback albums without prerelease promotion (D’Angelo’s *Black Messiah* and My Bloody Valentine’s *mbv*, the latter of which, to be fair, predated *Beyoncé* by about a year). Others experimented with technologically novel means of distribution (Thom Yorke surprise-released a solo album through BitTorrent; U2 spammed our iPhones with *Songs of Innocence* and just as quickly apologized for it). But the most successful digital drop since *Beyoncé* happened in February, when reigning rap king Drake released his 17-song mix tape *If You’re Reading This It’s Too Late* without warning. It sold half a million copies in a week, broke Spotify-streaming records, and no doubt ensured that this whole phenomenon won’t be going away anytime soon.

The brilliance of the surprise album is that it abides by one of the internet’s most important edicts: Less, actually, is more. This might seem counterintuitive, given that we usually think of the internet as a place overflowing with shouting matches, over-shares, and interminably twitching GIFs. But the more crowded the digital sphere gets, the more streamlining becomes a virtue—and the more we appreciate those who do not take up any more of our time or pixels than they need to. Tumblr trumps Myspace. Quiet R&B Zen master Frank Ocean is

more of an internet folk hero than the rapper who incessantly posts links to his own SoundCloud. Your friend who tweets five times a week is infinitely more entertaining than the one who tweets 50 times a day.

Of course, the surprise album is also a response to a moment in which artists must maintain their brand year-round, whether or not they’re hawking a new album. Drake is exceptionally good at this. The reason *If You’re Reading This* sold so well is not that it’s the best music Drake’s ever released (it’s not); it’s because Drake has mastered the digital era’s desire for both instant gratification and long-term anticipation. It’s been a year and a half since he’s put out a traditional album, yet he’s been releasing one-off tracks on his SoundCloud page at a steady though thoughtfully curated clip, keeping us interested (and keeping his name trending) while we await the next full album.

And yet Rihanna’s “Bitch Better Have My Money” helped me realize that I have come down with a bad case of surprise-album fatigue. Following pop music right now feels like having accidentally overheard a conversation about your surprise party but not knowing when or where it will take place; you walk into every room half-expecting to be bombarded with balloons. It’s exhausting. I do, however, know I am biased. On a recent panel about music criticism, I was asked what I thought would be the biggest change in my job over the next five years. I answered without hesitation: “The whole rise of the surprise album is the biggest challenge to pop criticism right now.” Afterward, a critic I admire precisely because he seems to stay above the internet fray came up to me and admitted that he still cannot listen to certain songs on *Beyoncé* without

recalling the stress of having to write about it. I nodded solemnly.

But when I recently asked some of my friends with healthier, nonprofessional relationships to pop music, most of them copped to some degree of surprise-album fatigue, too. “I feel like the press and the public tend to make a bigger deal out of surprise albums. That makes me feel like I should listen to them because everyone is talking about them,” my friend Mia said. “On the other hand, I feel like everyone is rushing to hop on the bandwagon and get in their two cents before the news cycle has passed, so I can’t be sure if the hype is justified.”

Does our collective fatigue mean the surprise album will eventually die? In some sense, I wonder if it’s already dead—killed as soon as we gave it a name, came to expect too much from every cryptic tweet, and started generating anticipatory listicles like “Four Artists Most Likely to Release a Surprise Album This Year.” (As a wise man once said: If you’re reading this, it’s too late.) Now that we’re primed to expect the unexpected, the least surprising thing a major pop artist could do tomorrow is release a new album.

The artists with the most eyes on them seem aware of this double bind. Earlier this year, in an interview with the Breakfast Club on Power 105.1, DJ Envy asked Kanye West if he had a release date set for his new album. Co-host Charlamagne Tha God broke in: “You can’t have a release date,” he said. “It’s played out. It’s last year’s fashion.” West—a man perpetually wary of last year’s fashion—agreed. “One hundred percent. Release dates is played out. So the surprise is going to be a surprise.” He chuckled a little nervously. “There goes the surprise.” ■

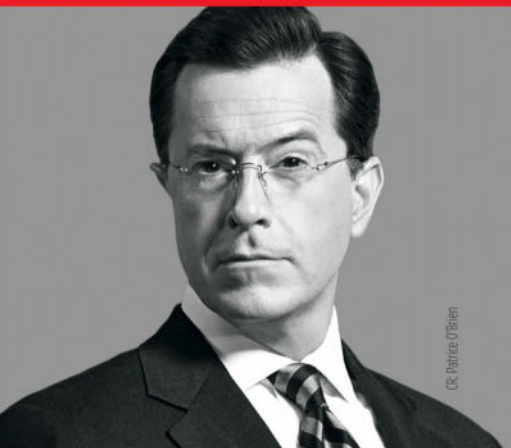
MOVIES / DAVID EDELSTEIN

## Ingenue, Meet Your Replacement

Life imitates art imitating life in Olivier Assayas’s *Clouds of Sils Maria*.



THE FRENCH writer-director Olivier Assayas has a genius for using ephemeral, gossip-magazine ingredients—wealth, fashion, celebrity—as a springboard for that most timeless of themes: the ephemerality of us. An aging international movie star is the center of his latest triumph, *Clouds of Sils Maria*, a high-flown title for a film of countless earthly pleasures, chief among them the faces of three very different but fascinating actresses: Juliette Binoche, Kristen Stewart, and Chloë Grace Moretz. If the juxtaposition of “fascinating” and “Kristen Stewart” stopped you cold, this is the film that should, by rights, warm you up to her. KStew seems unusually comfortable onscreen—ironically by plumbing her own discomfort, using her squirmy, twisty-mouthed, almost fatally thoughtful (for an actress) presence to generate an amazing amount of sympathy. Her American candor turns out to be the perfect foil for Binoche’s lyrical French elusiveness.



CR: Patrick O'Brien

SELECTED SHORTS

THE STORIES  
OF FLANNERY  
O'CONNOR

04.22.15 AT 7:30PM

Stephen Colbert and more read  
tales by the master of the comical  
Southern Gothic.



CR: Asbjørn Hansen

SELECTED SHORTS

AN EVENING  
WITH KARL OVE  
KNAUSGAARD

05.06.15 AT 7:30PM

The Norwegian author of the  
riveting *My Struggle* introduces  
actors reading stories he admires  
and an excerpt from the eagerly  
awaited *My Struggle Book IV*.

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Juliette Binoche and  
Kristen Stewart  
in *Clouds of Sils Maria*.

Stewart plays Valentine (pronounced *Valenteen*), the personal assistant to Binoche's Maria Enders, and a big source of the movie's delight is watching an ultra-poised Stewart (behind a huge pair of glasses) gulp coffee, juggle phone calls, schedule appointments, and run interference when the paparazzi turn up while we envision Stewart's own personal assistant doing the exact same thing at the exact same instant. We're in on the joke when she tosses off a synopsis of a dumb script ("There are werewolves involved for whatever reason"), quotes TMZ on a self-destructive young starlet, and adds, with a shrug, "Celebrity news—it's fun." She praises that same starlet—Moretz's Jo-Ann Ellis—for being "not completely antiseptic like the rest of Hollywood ... brave enough to be herself." Aye, the meta is strong in this one!

So is the scenery. Most of the movie takes place in and around the actress's rented cottage in Sils Maria, a village in the breathtaking Swiss municipality of Sils im Engadin, where Maria and Valentine hike, swim, and run lines for and argue over a play that Maria is poised to start rehearsing.

The next two paragraphs are convoluted but important, so *go slow*. The play is called *Maloja Snake*, named for a line of clouds that sometimes slithers around the mountains and along the rivers near Sils Maria. Twenty years earlier, the play and its subsequent film adaptation made Maria a star in the role of Sigrid, a nervy, unbehind beauty who becomes the personal assistant and lover of her 40-ish employer, Helena, and whose abandonment of her drives the older woman to suicide. Art imitated life, insofar as Maria's famed "modernity" eclipsed the "conventional style" of the past-her-prime actress playing Helena,

who perished a short time later under sad circumstances. Now, on the heels of the death of the elderly playwright, a hotshot stage director (Lars Eidinger) implores Maria to appear in a revival of *Maloja Snake*, except this time as Helena opposite the Sigrid of the blistering 19-year-old superstar Jo-Ann Ellis.

Shades of *All About Eve*. Existentially speaking, maybe worse. Maria wavers, balks, denies such a thing is even possible. She is, she insists, forever Sigrid, modern and strong and free to make her own rules. She could never be the weak, trapped, inelastic Helena. But Valentine, romantic to the core, argues that the character of

Helena is Sigrid, older now, unused to being turned down, shattered by the sudden realization of her powerlessness. Valentine—who's probably too blunt to make it as an actor's personal assistant—goes on to effuse over young Jo-Ann's courage to be emotionally defenseless, to eliminate all distance between the actress and the role, and implies that Maria has had her edges sanded away by time. In one sense, she's demonstrably correct: Maria is in the midst of a divorce that doesn't seem to have affected her one way or another. Years of love affairs, variable movies, and acting against green screens in comic-book blockbusters have left her cynical. Valentine argues that if Maria plays Helena as an older Sigrid, she'll recover her innocence.

I used the word *convoluted* above to characterize my own synopsis, not the film itself, which plays like a dream. Assayas's pace is easy, his structure linear: no tricky flashbacks, no jagged cuts. There's so little in the way of histrionics that it's hard to put one's finger on why the film is so terrifically intense—except that each actress is, in her

CLOUDS  
OF SILS MARIA  
DIRECTED BY  
OLIVIER ASSAYAS.  
SUNDANCE  
SELECTS, R.



own peculiar way, preternaturally high-strung, able to convey momentous emotional stakes without raising her voice above the pitch of conversation.

Big stars live for scripts like this. It's the ne plus ultra of actor bait, blurring the line between character and public persona in a way that makes acting seem like the highest form of enlightenment. Binoche, Stewart, and Moretz can disappear into their roles and at the same time stand outside them—a Buddhist ideal. When Maria and Valentine run lines, we often don't know if it's the play or if Maria and Valentine are enacting their own drama of youth pounding on the door of age. (It's both, of course.) And what of that next, meta level? Here is Binoche, the great, Oscar-winning actress, who at 51 is exactly twice the age of her presumably vastly richer and definitely more famous co-star and must be aware that Stewart is by far the bigger get for the papps. Here is KStew, ridiculed by hipsters for her sullenness and savaged by *Twi*-hards for allegedly breaking dear Robert's heart, her billion-dollar "franchise" behind her and obviously aware that her barely legal younger co-star is blossoming into the next "It" girl. Moretz arrives late in the film and upstages everyone. Her face has more graphic punch than her co-stars—her cheekbones are wider, her eyes bigger. Her Jo-Ann is just coming into her sexuality but traces of baby fat linger, a peak moment for an actress in this culture—and Jo-Ann is feeling her power. When she first meets Maria at a restaurant, she barely acknowledges Valentine's presence, and for the length of the scene Assayas's camera pretty much stays off Stewart. Of course it's just playacting, but this movie hits so close to the bone it must have hurt a little. That's what I want to believe, anyway.

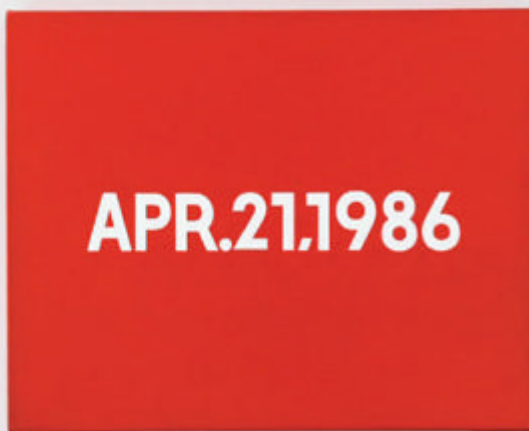
In a few places you see Assayas trying too hard. One of Valentine's dreamy paeans to youthful risk is too on the nose. A late scene in which Jo-Ann shows a remarkable lack of empathy for Maria needed another beat—it's too *All About Eve* too fast. The last scene, which features a young film director, is way too tidy. But Binoche pulls it off, as she pulls everything off. Her Maria is in denial for much of the movie, but then, with such subtlety you can't see it happening, Binoche transforms, becoming more self-possessed, less time's victim than a faintly amused bystander feeling the first stirrings of something beyond the material world. In *Clouds of Sils Maria*, Binoche gives a master class in film acting. It's not, as Valentine maintains, taking prodigious emotional risks and merging blindly with one's character. It's having the grace to hold something back, to suggest one's body—however beautiful—is a bad bet if you want to play the long game. ■

On Kawara, APR. 21, 1986 ("Monday"), New York, 1966–2013. Acrylic on canvas, 10 × 13 inches. Pictured with artist-made cardboard storage box, approx. 10 5/8 × 13 3/4 × 2 inches. Private collection. © On Kawara. Photo: Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

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## CLASSICAL MUSIC /

JUSTIN DAVIDSON

### The Mysterious Meredith Monk

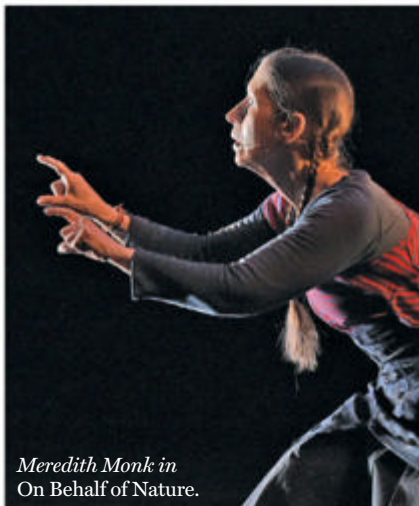
Fifty years of excellent  
weirdness.



MEREDITH MONK has spent 50 years producing a familiar kind of strangeness, uttering sounds you've never heard before but that seem to have been in the air for eons. Occasionally she sings words and phrases, more often just indeterminate shreds of language like something heard in a dream. At 72, she remains a straight-backed pixie with two-foot pigtails and precise but slightly awkward movements. Her pliable, silver-toned voice can still trip lightly off a consonant or ricochet from angry buzz to high hoot to chesty growl, or disappear into a vocal weave.

Monk's yearlong residency at Carnegie Hall made it clear how hard it is to separate her presence from her music. Other performer-composers of her generation, like Steve Reich and Philip Glass, long ago began to write scores that could fall into anyone's hands and come out okay. She, too, has shared her skills with the members of her Vocal Ensemble and a far-flung assortment of acolytes. In theory, Monk the performer could retire without harming Monk the composer. In practice, though, her originality is inseparable from her personality as a performer. She first communes with her muse in solitude, then

ON BEHALF OF  
NATURE  
BY MEREDITH MONK.  
ZANKEL HALL.  
MAY 2.



Meredith Monk in  
On Behalf of Nature.

lets ideas form in the kiln of her ensemble.

“Meredith Monk and Friends,” a recent four-and-a-half-hour marathon showing off the breadth of her influence, was a sequel to another afternoon-long celebration held at Zankel Hall in 2005. After that event, Paul Miller, a.k.a. DJ Spooky, the hyperintellectual iPad virtuoso, dragooned a variety of musicians into reinterpreting her pieces. Monk gave the project her blessing, though she seemed content with the idea that it had little to do with her. The result was *Monk Mix*, released on disc in 2012. Like most tribute albums, it made me wish I were listening to the honoree.

A decade after the first show, some of the *Monk Mix* veterans were back, like the Sonic Youth member Lee Ranaldo. He performed his guitar wizardry on *Astronaut Anthem*, originally a quiet choral meditation on interplanetary living. The score was just a pretext for Ranaldo to have fun with feedback, swing a guitar past an amplifier, and hammer the strings with a mallet to create a meteor shower of sound. In *Dungeon*, John Zorn's saxophone freak-out above Cyro Baptista's pounding bass drum came off as far more aggressive and much less plaintive than Monk's vocal version. Composers are opportunists. They suck up whatever influences they choose and recycle other people's music for their own purposes. These performances made it seem as if Monk's devotees had overheard her humming or snatched a sketch from her wastebasket, then sped off back to their comfort zones.

Of all Monk's friends and “friends,” composer Missy Mazzoli came closest to internalizing her spirit when she arranged a medley of two wildly different works composed 35 years apart. In the original “What Does It Mean?” from the 1970 album *Key*, Monk bangs out obsessively basic keyboard patterns and vocalizes, alternating between chipmunk squeals and guttural rasps. The luminous neo-medieval “Passage,” from the 2006 work *Impermanence*, is as glossy and seamless as the earlier piece is muscular and rough, but they share a lot of DNA. They both strip music down to an agile descendant over a ground bass, intimate meanings encrypted in stray syllables, and conjure up a vivid physical space—a vaulted crypt, say, that coats the voice in reverberant shellac. Mazzoli found the common spirit in those two disparate pieces, translating a kaleidoscope of vocal hues into an instrumental watercolor. Monk has said that she realized in the mid-1960s that the voice could be an instrument, containing sonic multitudes. It took her another few decades to treat instruments like voices. Mazzoli, who handles both with flair and sensitivity, found a way to express Monk's discoveries of these long-standing truths.



Monk has organized her life around a few slo-mo epiphanies. She spent the first phase of her career exploring the possibilities of her own body. She made the rounds of galleries and avant-garde-friendly venues, accompanying her chirps and incantations on a piano or a wheezing organ. When she reached the limits of performing solo, around 1978, she began working with a few like-minded singers, a group that soon expanded into a tightly knit corps able to deal with the complexities of her simplicity. “We were kind of like a rock-and-roll band, really,” she has said. “We went all over the world.” An extensive discography and a fistful of YouTube videos offer a taste of those deadpan performances, which are still enduringly, endearingly weird. In *Dolmen Music*, a cello slowly passes out a three-note scale: *do-re-mi*. Three voices catch that motive, chirping it, sped up. The score feels for a moment like a propeller just before it catches, spinning simultaneously slowly and fast, in opposite directions at the same time. Her inventions had always been theatrical, but now she had the resources to fuse song, dance, costumes, and instrumental sound into a full-on *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Then, in 2000, Monk discovered that she could deploy instruments not just one at a time but in great, massed armies. Michael Tilson Thomas prodded her to write her first orchestral piece; recently, the St. Louis Symphony gave the New York premiere of her second, called *Weave*, at Carnegie Hall. On first hearing, I found it unconvincing, little more than a soft-focus orchestral haze to flatter the voices of Monk’s longtime collaborators Theo Bleckmann and Katie Geissinger. I kept wishing the singers would break free of the cumbersome orchestra and get back to the astringent clarity of their vocal ensemble. But Monk’s music can worm its way into your mind, and I’ve since found it shimmering in my memory, a glittering swath of sound inviting me to listen again, harder.

On May 2, Monk and her Vocal Ensemble will conclude their festive season with a concert in Zankel Hall that will include selections from “On Behalf of Nature,” an ambitious show with an environmental agenda that had its New York premiere at BAM in December. The singer-dancers move in nested orbits, raising one arm in a circular wave, cooing quietly in looping vocal lines. The circle is the key geometry of Monk’s music. Her ensemble pieces have an around-the-campfire quality, with all the voices braided together in a ring of sound. Maybe that’s why her trajectory has felt so consistent and comforting over so many years, even though she’s never stopped moving. She has been carrying out a slow revolution, with no end in sight. ■



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taj mahal

PHOTO BY FRANK STEWART

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The CULTURE PAGES

To

Do

TWENTY-FIVE  
THINGS TO SEE,  
HEAR, WATCH,  
AND READ.

APRIL 8-22

### MOVIES

## 1. See *Furious 7*

*Explosions in memoriam.*

In theaters.

Though it's unseen at this writing, you'll want to speed over to *Furious 7* to catch Paul Walker's last lap as ex-cop O'Conner in this apparently final installment of the hot-dog hot-rod saga. Though I've often found myself thinking, *What's the point?*, I enjoyed the first, fourth, fifth (especially), and sixth in this series, which gave cushy gigs to Vin Diesel, Ludacris, and Michelle Rodriguez; Kurt Russell is in this one, along with Jason Statham, who ended part six by blowing away one of the good guys and vowing he'd be coming for them all.

DAVID EDELSTEIN

### TV

## 2. Watch *Game of Thrones*

*Winter is coming (again).*

HBO, April 12 at 9 p.m.

The most watched, most hyped, most expensive show in HBO history returns with stories that wrap up plots from the two darkest books in George R.R. Martin's series. Peter Dinklage's Tyrion Lannister is the anchor, even more so than in seasons past.

MATT ZOLLER SEITZ

### CLASSICAL MUSIC

## 3. Hear Boston Symphony Orchestra

*With the new maestro in tow.*

Carnegie Hall, April 15 through 17.

As the New York Philharmonic hunts for its next music director, it's shooting covetous glances at its northern rival, currently enjoying a honeymoon with its hotshot leader. Andris Nelsons brings the BSO to Carnegie for a high-decibel

three-night stand that includes Mahler's Sixth and Shostakovich's Tenth. JUSTIN DAVIDSON

### ART

## 4. See *Enigmas*

*Test your eye, test your taste.*

Andrea Rosen Gallery, through April 25.

At one of the trickiest, most evil-genius group shows likely to open this year, we get work that is, looks like, might actually be, and most definitely isn't the predominant banal abstract-painting mode of the moment, Zombie Formalism. Some was made by a super-hip collective; some by the excellent wizard-originator of all things zombie, Julian Schnabel; and some by one of the few zombies whose art I actually like, David Ostrowski.

JERRY SALTZ

### TV

## 5. Watch *Louie*

*More ha-ha, less ho-hum.*

FX, April 9 at 10:30 p.m.

Louis C.K.'s sorta-sitcom had its most formally daring season last year, staging several movie-length stories and alienating some viewers with a date-rape episode. This abbreviated fifth season looks to be a return to something not simpler, exactly, but more content to amuse and engage rather than dazzle and overwhelm.

M.Z.S.

### POP

## 6. See Stevie Wonder

*Not just a victory lap.*

Barclays Center, April 12.

Sometimes these "artist plays a classic album" nostalgia tours are a bit much, but you cannot argue with this one: Stevie Wonder, in Brooklyn, playing *Songs in the Key of Life* from start to finish. Enough said.

LINDSAY ZOLADZ

PHOTOGRAPHS: RACHEL NEVILLE (DANCE THEATER OF HARLEM); HELEN SLOAN/COURTESY OF HBO (GAME OF THRONES); CHARLOTTE RUTHERFORD (MARINA AND THE DIAMONDS)



**THEATER**

# 7. See Hamlet

*There is method in it.*

Classic Stage Company, through May 10.

While the Broadway season heads into overdrive, don't miss the chance to watch Peter Sarsgaard, who has played three of Chekhov's great restless-philosopher roles, tackle their progenitor. Austin Pendleton directs a cast that also includes Penelope Allen as Gertrude, Lisa Joyce as Ophelia, and—can it be?—Stephen Spinella as Polonius.

JESSE GREEN

**SEE THIS NOW:**  
**'ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY'**  
*Jesse Green on a revival that shines.*

There are a million big reasons that *On the Twentieth Century*, the 1978 musical by Cy Coleman and Comden and Green, shouldn't work today, but there's nevertheless one small reason—about four-foot-eleven—it does: Kristin Chenoweth, a comic genius in a role ideally suited to her gifts. It's no surprise that she can sing Coleman's droll operetta pastiche: She has the perfect bright-white-starlight soprano for its martial cadences and coloratura roulades. Nor should it really be a surprise, though it always somehow is, to realize how methodically she has taken apart every beat, and even every syllable, to find what she can make funny in it. All the disassembly is done behind the scenes; once the reassembly is done, it's like she's cleaned a chandelier. In many ways, that's how the production, directed by Scott Ellis, works, too. Not everything works, and perhaps not everything can. But especially when it moves (the choreography is by Warren Carlyle) and sings (the music direction is by Kevin Stites) it sparkles like new, with each small detail detailed as if for the first time. *(For the full review, go to Vulture.com.)*

**DANCE**

# 8. See Dance Theatre of Harlem

*On the up and up.*

New York City Center, April 8, 10, and 11.

This small but crucial modern ballet company is still developing, but its strengths—poetic, thoroughly invested dancers and an eye toward important new work, like Robert Garland's engrossing and invigorating *Return*—are consistent, and reason enough to catch this season.

REBECCA MILZOFF

**TV**

# 9. Watch Orphan Black

*Season three, finally.*

BBC America, April 18 at 9 p.m.

The sci-fi drama returns with a whole new batch of male clones to contend with. Come for Tatiana Maslany's gripping performance; stay for Tatiana Maslany's nine other gripping performances.

MARGARET LYONS

**POP**

# 10. Hear Sufjan Stevens's Carrie & Lowell

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Top: Noh Mask in a Silk Case (detail); Japan; 17th century; wood, lacquer; 5 1/4 x 8 1/4 in. Brooklyn Museum. Gift of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt in memory of Kermit Roosevelt, 44.192.1. Right: Still from Storm Over Tibet



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barely knew, each song more melancholy and beautiful than the last.

## BOOKS

### 11. **Read** Toni Morrison's **God Help the Child**

*A throwback that looks forward.*

Knopf, April 21.

America's only living Nobel-winning novelist has distilled her seasoned style, dispensing with the lyrical byways of earlier work. Her latest, following the half-magical journey of an unloved, very dark-skinned young woman named Bride, recalls her 1970 debut, *The Bluest Eye*, but, in a modern twist, Bride's blackness becomes a lucrative asset in exoticizing Los Angeles. **BORIS KACHKA**



## DOCUMENTARY DOSSIER

*The Tribeca Film Festival (April 15 through 26) has become one of the world's premier fests for documentaries. Bilge Ebiri picks the most promising of the pack.*

### ►► **LIVE FROM NEW YORK!**

The opening-night film, about the legacy of *Saturday Night Live*, will have to condense a lot of comedy—and a lot of egos—to feature length.

### ►► **IN TRANSIT**

The final credit for the late Albert Maysles, who co-directed this portrait of individuals along the busy Empire Builder train route, running from Chicago to Seattle.

### ►► **THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES**

Russell Brand and prolific director Michael Winterbottom (*24 Hour Party People*) team up for this hybrid doc-comedy about income inequality and the global economic crisis. True, Brand can be both engaging and infuriating, but Winterbottom has a keen eye for performance and screen presence.

### ►► **A BALLERINA'S TALE**

The great author and filmmaker Nelson George follows Misty Copeland, the first female African-American soloist at American Ballet Theatre in two decades, as she prepares for a performance. Just one screening, followed by a Q&A and a special performance.

## ART

### 12. **See** Alice Neel

*Shattering, sublime physicality.*

David Zwirner Gallery, through April 18.

In a gathering of beautiful small drawings and watercolors—many of them done when she was young and living in Harlem with a series of lovers—Alice Neel's virtuosity resonates. She reveals, reveals, and takes solace in the secret garden of deeply human, intimate moments between lovers, and her touch allows you just far enough into the work to let you know that all of this was real. **J.S.**

## POP

### 13. **Listen to** **Courtney Barnett**

*A jangly jewel.*

Mom & Pop/Marathon Artists/Milk!

"I love you, I hate you, I'm on the fence, it all depends," whip-smart Aussie Courtney Barnett declares on *Sometimes I Sit and Think, and Sometimes I Just Sit*, her debut album—a staggeringly articulate depiction of indecision and 20-something-in-betweenness.



MOVIES

## 14. See The Vertigo Effect

From great heights.

BAMcinémathèque, April 16 through 30.

Not all of us were happy when Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* dethroned *Citizen Kane* as the "best film of all time" in a prominent poll, but here's a tip of the fedora to BAM for this survey, featuring 29 films "influenced by or anticipating" Hitchcock's swank odyssey of obsession, which screens opening night. Among the treats: Chris Marker's towering documentary *Sans Soleil*, Brian De Palma's *Obsession*, François Truffaut's *Mississippi Mermaid*, and Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct*. D.E.

THEATER

## 15. Listen to The Fortress of Solitude

Loud and clear.

Ghostlight Records; Joe's Pub, April 13.

Jonathan Lethem's novel about music became a garbled musical at the Public Theater last year, but a lot of the confusion melts away on the fine cast album. The highlight is still the same, though: the propulsive and rapturous "Take Me to the Bridge." Joe's Pub celebrates the release with a concert. J.G.

POP

## 16. Listen to Earl Sweatshirt

A stellar sophomore release.

Columbia/Tan Cressida.

At just ten tracks and 30 minutes, Earl Sweatshirt's *I Don't Like Shit, I Don't Go Outside* is sparse, but just as heavy, lyrically and beats-wise, as *Doris*, his minimalist debut. His growth is evident on songs like "Faucet" and "Grief," in which the drastically slowed-down beats perfectly match his vocal cadences.

NEW MUSIC/OPERA

## 17. Hear Crash

No divas here.

Roulette, April 15 through 18.

Tirelessly avant-garde composer Robert Ashley loathed the word *opera*, though he wrote dozens of the things. The term hardly describes his 14-hour piece for television, or his trio of stage works meant to be intermingled—or his final opus, *Crash*, which features six soloists seated at desks, sharing three characters, while a "photo-projection score" plays on three screens. J.D.

MOVIES

## 18. See Salad Days: A Decade of Punk in Washington, D.C.

With special guests.

IFC Center, opening April 17.

Flash back to Marion Barry-era D.C. with this rock doc, tracing the history of the capital's punk movement; Henry Rollins, Ian MacKaye, Thurston Moore, and Dave Grohl (who was picked up by Nirvana from D.C.-suburbs stalwarts Screamin' O'Jays) all make appearances.

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#### PHOTOGRAPHY

### 19. **See** Jitka Hanzlova

*Animal magnetism.*

Yancey Richardson Gallery, through May 2.

Photographs of horses, many in extreme close-ups that turn their nostrils or eyelashes or flanks into near abstractions of lush fur and muscular flesh.

#### DANCE/POP

### 20. **Go to** In Search Of ...

*Spring, finally?*

The High Line at 14th St., April 11 from 2 to 5 p.m.

This outdoor dance party (with the DJ pair AndrewAndrew) and spring fling (with the matchmaking services of Modern Love Club's Amy Van Doran) starts the season right, presented by Friends of the High Line with *New York*.

#### THEATER

### 21. **See** Séquence 8

*Flying with the greatest of ease.*

New York City Center, April 16 through 26.

Les 7 Doigts de la Main (the *nouveau cirque* troupe behind the dazzling acrobatics of *Pippin*, now with an eighth member) remounts the trapezes, rings, fireman's poles, and seesaws in its first full-length show here since 2011's *Traces*. J.G.

#### ART

### 22. **See** Michele Oka Doner

*Bark with bite.*

Marlborough Gallery, April 15 through May 16.

Oka Doner's sculptures may be static, but they seem to contain all the wildness of the natural world; this retrospective will capture the variety of her career, from bark-bound works on paper to a giant form carved from the roots of a banyan tree.

#### POP

### 23. **Hear** Marina and the Diamonds's Froot

*It's good for you.*

Atlantic Records.

This album feels like Marina's best yet—her slinky yet strong soprano is as angelic as it is piercing. Start with "I'm a Ruin," the floaty first single. J.D.

#### CLASSICAL MUSIC

### 24. **Hear** Music Before Bach

*Way, way back.*

Zankel Hall, April 8.

J.S. Bach is the noon of music history: Everything before him is considered early. Carnegie usually ignores the stuff, but now it's compensating with an unmissable monthlong festival. Among the opening highlights: the supercharged group L'Arpeggiata lighting up music by Henry Purcell. J.D.

#### TV

### 25. **Watch** Younger

*Not Carrie, but cute.*

TV Land, Tuesdays at 10 p.m.

Darren Star's new show is no *Sex and the City*, but it's adorable watching Sutton Foster as a 40-year-old divorcée trying to pass as a millennial so she can reclaim her life both at work and in love.

BACK ISSUES

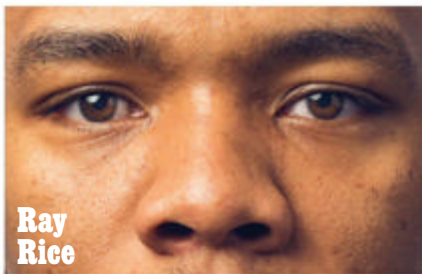
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Rice's childhood, and Rice felt he had a revelation. "I forgot about the pain and agony that I had to go through growing up, the stuff that my mom went through. Stuff that I had to bear as a kid," he explained. "The thing that kids did growing up—I didn't have that childhood," Rice told me. "I had to provide. That was my life from 13 to 28. I'm still providing. It was scary." Ball told Rice: "That kind of responsibility is way, way, way over the top."

As we sat together, Rice looked around the room. He was quiet, as if to let the moment sink in. His mother's Shih Tzu pup lay on the floor staring at him like an adoring fan. Rice leaned forward, eager to continue. "There was a hurt child in there, you know." He tapped his chest. "I was still hurt from my past."

Ball had broken Rice down, and then, Rice said, "he built me back up." Ball is a pastoral counselor, and his therapeutic approach is rooted in the Bible. He assured Rice that everything happens according to God's plan, wisdom that Rice dutifully accepted. "Dr. Ball made me change my priorities," Rice said. "You've got to understand that growing up, football meant more to me than anything else. And now my priorities are God, family, then football."

Ball pressed Rice to imagine a life in which football was not his top priority. After all, it's possible he'll never play again. "I love kids," Rice told me. He thought he might work with them, he said, trying to sound cheerful and not quite succeeding.

One day, a few months after the assault, Ray turned to Janay. "Damn, this ain't how I want my career to end."

"What's important?" she asked.

Ray knew the answer. "My family, you, Rayven."

Rice knew what the domestic-violence victims' advocates would say. His behavior was classic, almost cliché. After the abuse, the abuser feels terrible; he overcompensates until the next flare-up. Rice didn't care. He'd always worked harder than anyone else, and now he'd put his all into his new home life. In our conversa-

tions, he took every opportunity to praise Janay—so much so that the praise sometimes felt a bit strained. "The biggest accolade in the house, even though I was winning the Super Bowl, on a personal-achievement note, is Janay graduating from Towson University. She was going to be, still is going to be, something special in life."

Rice also said he was paying attention to the small stuff. He goes with Janay to Target and Walmart—"Ray loves a deal," his mother-in-law said. The Rices don't have a nanny, and he helps with child care and rushes around doing chores. "She's a neat freak. You know how many points doing the dishes gets for me?"

"This year has been good for the family," Janay said. "Ray spends as much time with us as he possibly can." Most mornings, Rice takes his daughter to school—"She thought I was a traveling salesman," he'd been away so much. He cut back on the crowds at the house, but he's a talker and constantly dialed friends and family. He even said he feels guilty about the position he put the league in. "It's unfortunate that my actions caused collateral damage that I never could have imagined," he told me. "Unfortunately, even though I was responsible for creating the situation, commissioner Goodell ended up taking quite a hit for it."

Ray, Janay, and Rayven make frequent trips back to New Rochelle, where they have relatives, friends, and admirers. And they've bought a house in Connecticut, closer to home. Rice vows never to move again. Earlier, when his picture had been removed from the New Rochelle high school's wall of fame, people at the Hollow staged a spontaneous candlelight vigil. "He made a mistake," said his friend Henderson Clarke, a former basketball player whose own prospects had been dashed when he had a run-in with the law. "We all make mistakes." Over Christmas, Rice was even invited to give away \$10,000 to an underprivileged-families charity in Westchester County, a risk for the sponsor, Steiner Sports, since charities want no association with a national villain. It was, of course, filmed for local news.

My time with Rice was coming to an end—he had to pick up Janay for dinner. I asked him how it would feel if his career was over. "Honestly, it would hurt, because I didn't leave the game the way I wanted to. I didn't leave the game because I wasn't good enough. I've still got a whole lot of game, and I'm not ready to call it quits." Rice paused a moment. He knew what he had to say. "But I don't love football more than I love my wife." ■



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 49

critique of free-market ideology—"Don't let anybody tell you that, you know, it's corporations and businesses that create jobs"—came at an event during which she shared the stage with Elizabeth Warren, who poses a threat to Clinton from the left.

Clinton's worst gaffe of late came last year, in response to a question from Diane Sawyer about her sky-high speaking fees. Recognizing her vulnerability, she overcompensated, claiming that she and Bill were "dead broke" when they left the White House. According to one Republican operative who's conducted focus groups on Clinton in Ohio and Colorado, "when you play that Diane Sawyer interview for lower-income women, women who really have struggled to put food on the table for their kids, they got physically upset at her about that remark." Clinton only compounded the error when, in subsequent interviews, she tried to defend it as literally true. "She's not very adept at cleaning that stuff up," says the Republican operative. "Her tendency is to double down, rather than say that was a ridiculous comment." Or, as Luntz says, "She doesn't know when or how to say, 'Hey, I fucked up.'"

In this sense, the March press conference actually represented a sort of progress: Clinton contended that, "looking back," she wished she'd done things differently. "Rewind to 2008, and everyone was telling her to say that about Iraq and she didn't," says a Democratic strategist close to Clinton's team. "Did the mountain move? No. Did the hills get smaller? Yes. There was an indication that this wasn't the same Hillary."

In a tug-of-war campaign, no one gaffe is as consequential as it feels in the moment. "Especially in a presidential race, when there's so much information about the candidates, it's very difficult for these moments to pierce people's consciousness," says John Sides. This can be true, he argues, even with monumental gaffes, like Romney's surreptitiously videotaped "47 percent" comments. Although it was the defining quote of the campaign—and dominated headlines, as well as Obama's media strategy—for much of September and October, Sides and Vavreck demonstrate in *The Gamble* that it had no bearing on the race's outcome. Yes,

some supporters abandoned Romney in the two weeks after the comments became public, but they didn't go to Obama—they began identifying themselves as “undecided.” Then, after Romney's strong performance in the first debate, they returned to him. And so what looked like a groundswell after the debate was simply his old supporters coming home.

What if Romney *hadn't* performed well in the first debate? Sure, the voters who abandoned him after his gaffe may never have seriously entertained voting for Obama, but what *was* suddenly in play was their enthusiasm for the candidate—and, by extension, their likelihood of turning out to vote.

Motivation, not persuasion, is the key factor in a presidential race with an electorate as polarized as it is today. “The idea of the thoughtfully independent voter,” says Karol, “is mostly a myth.” As a candidate, you're not trying to sell yourself; you arrive presold, and the critical question becomes, How many of your kinds of shoppers are out there?

Despite the GOP rout in the 2014 midterms, some Democrats remained amazingly sanguine about Clinton's 2016 prospects because they believe the demographics are in her favor. Turnout in presidential elections is always higher for Democrats than in midterms. As Markos Moulitsas Zúniga of Daily Kos wrote last November, “We have two separate Americas voting every two years ... And Democrats can win easily with the one, and Republicans can win easily with the other.” More important, the trend lines are promising for Clinton. White voters—or, as demographers call them, “non-Hispanic white voters,” or, as Republicans call them, “our base”—are becoming an increasingly smaller part of the electorate.

This is particularly pronounced in key swing states. In Florida, for instance, the white share of the electorate is expected to decline from its 2012 level of 65.3 percent to 61.7 percent in 2016, while the Hispanic share will increase from 17.1 percent to 20.2 percent. In Nevada, the white portion will fall 4.5 points, to 60.2 percent, while the Hispanic share climbs 2.9 points to 18.8 percent. Obama narrowly won both these states in 2012; a Republican candidate in 2016 faces a steeper climb. Now consider North Carolina, which Obama lost by 2.2 percent in 2012. There, voters of color are expected to increase their share of the electorate two points by 2016, to 31 percent. According to projections by Patrick Oakford of the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank whose founder, John Podesta, will be Clinton's campaign chair, Clinton just needs to retain the same level of support Obama received from North Carolina voters of color in 2012. Then she'll beat his overall perfor-

mance by 2.3 percent—tipping the state, by 0.1 percent, in her favor.

Ironically, though, while Clinton may be entering the campaign with enviable demographics, it is precisely here where she is most vulnerable and where her deficiencies as a campaigner may inflict the worst damage. Put bluntly: Will her candidacy motivate Democratic voters anywhere near as much as did Obama's?

Hahrie Han, a Wellesley College political scientist, spoke to 80 volunteers on the 2008 Obama campaign. “People we interviewed could quote parts of his speeches word for word,” she says. But Han found they were motivated less by the speeches than the message behind them. “The Obama campaign generated a narrative that was diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational,” Han explains. “There was a problem that voters felt—that the old style of politics didn't work anymore. Obama was the solution to that problem—a new kind of politics and ‘Yes, we can.’ And the call to arms was ‘Come to help Obama.’” Even as an incumbent, Obama remained an inspirational candidate. Black turnout in 2012 was a historic 66.2 percent—a higher percentage than white turnout.

In the past, Clinton has resisted making gender-based appeals. “I'm not running as a woman candidate,” she told supporters during the 2008 primary. In the years since—in part instigated by her campaign—there has been a wave of attention to gender equality across American culture. Beyoncé is a feminist; a campaign is under way to replace Andrew Jackson with a woman on the \$20 bill. Clinton is already talking openly about being a grandmother, and she is widely expected to reverse her gender-neutral strategy this time around.

The challenge will be making a vote for Clinton—a woman who has been among the most powerful people in Washington for more than two decades—feel trailblazing. She is building a field operation modeled on Obama's, lining up many of the same operatives. Jeremy Bird, who ran the field operation for Obama's reelection campaign, has been working for the Clinton super-PAC Ready for Hillary and is expected to join her campaign once it officially launches. And Clinton has enlisted Obama's message-making gurus, including his former ad-maker Jim Margolis. “Jim Margolis could make an iceberg feel warm,” says Luntz. “You tell me Margolis has been hired, it's worth two points in her total.”

Even if Clinton hires every member of the vaunted Obama machine, there'll be one important piece missing: Obama himself. “Can you re-create the Obama turnout operation without Obama?” worries one Democratic operative.

The biggest difficulty in analyzing Clinton's candidacy right now is, of course, that we don't know whom she will be running against. In her wildest dreams, it will be Ted Cruz or Rand Paul, two senators skilled at rallying the Republican base but distrusted (or, in Cruz's case, loathed) by the party Establishment. But let's assume that David Karol is correct, and that the GOP nominee will be a familiar name popular among the party's core donors. Let's also assume that though his campaign will be extraordinarily well funded (groups backed by Charles and David Koch have pledged to spend almost \$1 billion leading up to 2016), Clinton's fund-raising will be equal to the task, and the finance race will roughly balance out.

Perhaps, then, Clinton will be positioning herself against Wisconsin governor Scott Walker. Unless Walker dramatically shifts strategy, he will be running a campaign focused less on broadening the GOP tent than on increasing the turnout of his base. This, in turn, would give Clinton ammunition to increase minority turnout for her. A Walker candidacy would clarify certain themes for Clinton—her vision for the role of government is considerably more expansionist than his, and it polls better. A recent Washington *Post* poll proposing a Clinton/Walker election had her leading 55 percent to 38 percent. But Walker complicates Clinton's life in one major way. He'd be, as he calls himself, “a face for the future.” Time for a Change, in spades.

A campaign against Jeb Bush would present different opportunities and different challenges. A Bush surname would certainly help neutralize Clinton fatigue, and he might have more trouble getting his base to turn out. The same Washington *Post* poll, recasting the race as Clinton/Bush, put her at 54 percent and him at 40 percent. But Bush lives in Florida with his Mexican wife, speaks Spanish at home, and supports a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants. In 1998, he won 61 percent of Florida's Hispanic vote in his successful gubernatorial campaign. (He also picked up 14 percent of Florida's African-American vote.) That Bush is angering conservative activists with his moderate immigration stance—as well as his continued support for Common Core education policies—could make it harder for Clinton to distinguish herself and the themes of her campaign. Bill Clinton, according to the *Times*, views Bush—as well as Florida senator Marco Rubio—as the most daunting GOP challenger to his wife.

Two different opponents; two very different messaging challenges. The danger to the Clinton campaign, at this early stage, is not that she might slip in a debate or never quite muster an adequate explanation for deleting emails as secretary of State. It's that



she might not have the ability to break through the cynicism and noise of our political circus and deliver a striking, clear message. In other words, she might never figure out how to get journalists to stop writing articles like this one.

**I**T'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE to overstate just how much Clinton hates the press. She doesn't trust it, avoids it at all costs, assumes the worst intentions, and generally wishes it would just go away. Her contempt for the people who cover her was on full display in her press conference last month—as was their contempt for her. It's a poisonous relationship with multiple levels of dysfunction on both sides. Unfortunately for Clinton, she's the one who bears the brunt of the fallout.

Some Clinton allies are encouraged by the relationship she forged with the State Department press corps during her four years in the Cabinet. The paranoia and outright hostility that permeated her interactions with reporters during the 2008 campaign were replaced by collegiality and openness as she traveled the world. Then again, that experience isn't exactly good practice for tooling around the Midwest with campaign reporters in tow. "When she's on a plane with Mark Landler and Reuters and a bunch of nerds asking her about Burma and policy issues, she knows those issues inside out and she knows the trip wires and how to navigate issues that in reality are really dicey. She's in her element," says Tommy Vietor. "But out on the campaign trail, she's going to be getting open-ended questions about her feelings and God knows what else, stuff that's comparatively unimportant but where there's no good or necessarily right answers, and that's just hard."

Not that Clinton isn't trying. She's recently hired a slew of press aides who—unlike many of those on whom she's relied in the past—don't loathe, and maybe even like, the reporters who cover her. She's also taken her own halting steps toward turning on the charm with campaign reporters. Two weeks ago, she gave the keynote address at a political-journalism-awards dinner in Washington. The speech was well received. (She announced that she wanted a "new beginning" with reporters, which they were welcome to as soon as they signed the non-disclosure agreement tucked under their seats.) But it was what happened after her speech that struck many people as new and different: Clinton stuck around and schmoozed. "That's something Hillary 2008 didn't do," says a Democratic strategist close to Clinton's team. "Back then, she'd give the speech and peace out, especially in a roomful of journalists." A Clinton

adviser adds, "We want to create more forums like that. It's important to connect with real people, but it's important to connect with the press, too."

Journalists love badass Hillary—the one who checks her BlackBerry with her sunglasses on. But as much as they (and she) might wish otherwise, that Clinton is a rare sight. And covering the regular Clinton is often a drag. She's been around too long, and reporters know her story too well, to get much of a thrill from it; even if she were a fresh face, her particular political talents don't lend themselves to a riveting narrative. The Republican strategist Stuart Stevens likens political skill to figure skating: "It's an endeavor entirely judged by a jury with no empirical metrics." Alienating the jury is a dangerous thing. "I am in the Bill Clinton camp on this," Stevens says. "For multiple reasons, Obama has been judged differently by the jury than Hillary."

In small ways, Clinton could repair the relationship. Most important, the same charm offensive she waged on the Obama White House could work on the press pack, too. But it'll need to be an effort sustained not only in Washington but also in the dog days of Virginia and Colorado, Ohio and Florida.

If she can't, that will only encourage reporters to cover her critically—maybe even, as Clinton and her allies suspect, more critically than they do other politicians—which in turn could be enough to tip the race in favor of her opponent. "To the extent that the news media wants to dissect her, that could affect perceptions of her if that kind of criticism is a sustained feature of news coverage," says Sides. He points to Al Gore's experience in 2000, when the press's repeated hyping of a series of small misstatements and minor exaggerations by Gore increasingly led voters, even Democrats, to conclude that he was untrustworthy. "Can we say that had Gore been perceived as honest in October, as he was in July, that that would have given him the race?" asks Sides. "Not necessarily. But it could have."

The question confronting Clinton now is not so much whether she can withstand the scrutiny but the degree of the scrutiny itself. Are we so fixated on diagnosing and dissecting her weaknesses, on scouting all the ways in which she isn't a particularly gifted political athlete, that the effort becomes, in a sense, self-fulfilling? "The dissections can be more influential than the actual objective features and qualities of the candidate herself," says Sides. In the end, the strength Clinton will need most, and on which the fate of her campaign may rest, will be her ability to make us stop dwelling on her weaknesses. ■



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 90

you have that heartbreak awaiting you, you can't make yourself less bored in the moment."

The book also cracks a window into her own ambition. At one point, she tells a story about two other male writers talking about a third, trying to decide if he was "a threat." "Did they talk to each other about me that way? Did they think of me as either threatening or not?" she writes. So she asks one of them, "in jest but I was not kidding." He wouldn't say—"I guess, because, on a fundamental level that has both something and nothing to do with writing, I am not one. Has any female writer ever been considered a threat by a male one? Aside from possibly Susan Sontag."

"When women write a book about ideas, it doesn't get discussed as a book about ideas," she says at lunch. "I threw in some highbrow intellectual bait for someone to take if they want to, but everyone is just going to talk about, 'Oh, it's about a woman in her 40s.'" She tells me about a radio appearance she did to promote her second novel, *The Effect of Living Backwards*. "I remember being in the green room and hearing them say, 'So we just talked to X man author whose book about struggling with class identity, etc.'—but meanwhile it was just a book about this dude's family—'and now we're going to hear from Heidi Julavits, who has written a book about a family.' I had written a book about a hijacking! Somehow if you're a woman, you've written a book about a family, and if you're a man, you've written a big book about a concept."

With this book, though, Julavits may be her most menacing when she's at her most female. "I feel like whenever I go out into the world, I do my best to make a lot of jokes and seem nonthreatening. I think now as a woman in her 40s, I'm just like, *Ah, fuck it. Let's be threatening*," she says. "I half feel like with this book, if no men read it, I just don't care." She pauses to consider. "Maybe I'm just responding to *The Bachelor* last night. He sent home the smart girl who cracked jokes. The smart girl who cracks jokes does not win the bachelor." ■



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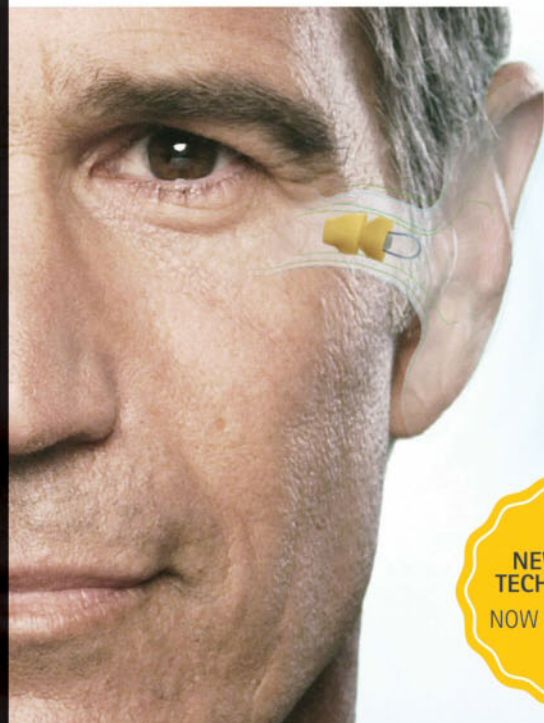
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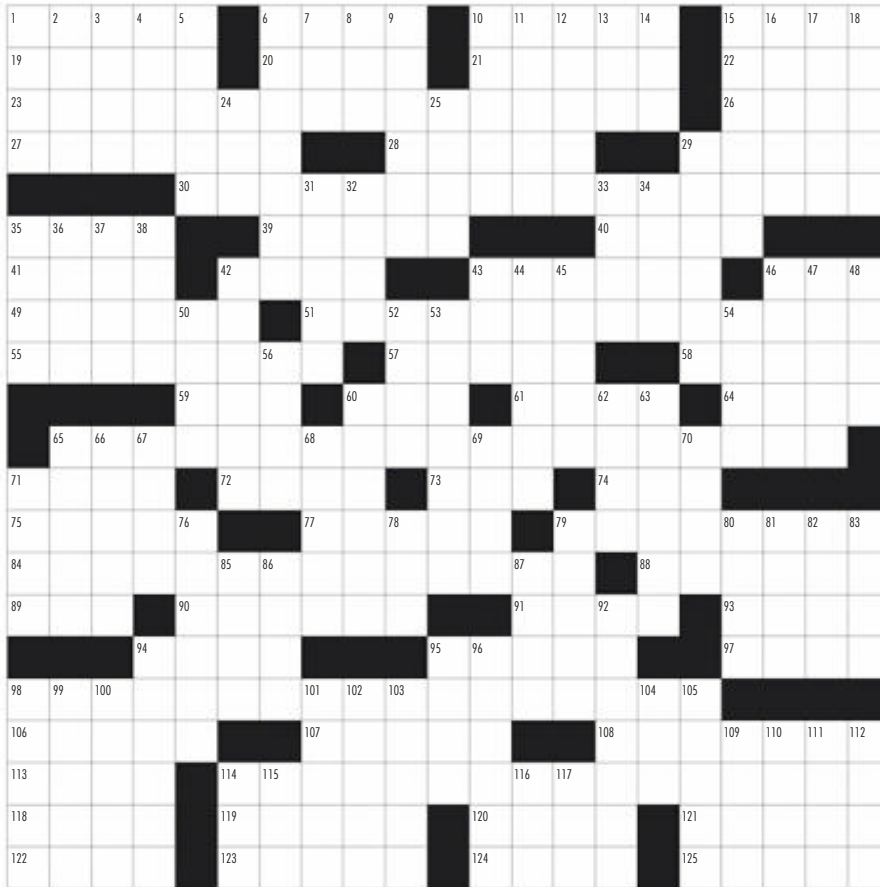
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# Car-pun-try

New York Crossword by Cathy Allis



## Across

- 1 High points
- 6 Buggy in Covent Garden
- 10 Mind's-eye view
- 15 \_\_\_ Crunch (Quaker brand)
- 19 Glow
- 20 Celebratory circle dance
- 21 Blood-drive participant
- 22 Miscellany
- 23 What a new car mechanic might be paid for?
- 26 Proposed law
- 27 New Testament letter
- 28 Harness race gaits
- 29 Morocco's capital
- 30 Car tunes, à la a Stevie Wonder album?
- 35 Hooved hybrid
- 39 Conan Doyle character Adler
- 40 Skip
- 41 Border on
- 42 Stage direction
- 43 Imp
- 46 Café-making need
- 49 Sell directly to consumers
- 51 Sight of a car in the desert, perhaps?
- 55 Shape on Turkey's flag
- 57 Ask (about)
- 58 Spring-blooming bulb

- 59 Author Umberto
- 60 "\_\_\_ Wiedersehen"
- 61 Rick's "Casablanca" love
- 64 Knicks rivals
- 65 "Great coif to go with the car, huh?"
- 71 Faris of TV's "Mom"
- 72 Just fair
- 73 H.S. math course
- 74 Sr. income source
- 75 Michelangelo statue in St. Peter's
- 77 Counting everything
- 79 Bratislava's country
- 84 Car belonging to Martini's partner?
- 88 Territory
- 89 It might move a mt.
- 90 "A Writer's Life" writer, Gay \_\_\_
- 91 Wife of Zeus
- 93 Kind of clef
- 94 Continental currency
- 95 Low-budget prefix
- 97 Horse-coat designation
- 98 Drama involving a car part, Alistair Cooke style?
- 106 Spam container, often
- 107 Husky with a Central Park statue

- 108 Horn & Hardart eatery, once
- 113 "Hold your horses!"
- 114 Sleuth who solves car problems, in a film spoof?
- 118 To be, to Bizet
- 119 Second showing
- 120 Agitate
- 121 New staffer
- 122 Went kaput
- 123 Health-insurance giant
- 124 Line of symmetry
- 125 Squash variety

## Down

- 1 Queens-stadium surname
- 2 Dice
- 3 Marque of BMW
- 4 Rear- \_\_\_ (strikes from behind)
- 5 Rears
- 6 Diamondbacks' city
- 7 Hold up
- 8 Knack
- 9 Aston \_\_\_ (many a James Bond car)
- 10 Blockhead
- 11 Nisan, for one
- 12 Ouzo flavoring
- 13 Suffix with poly

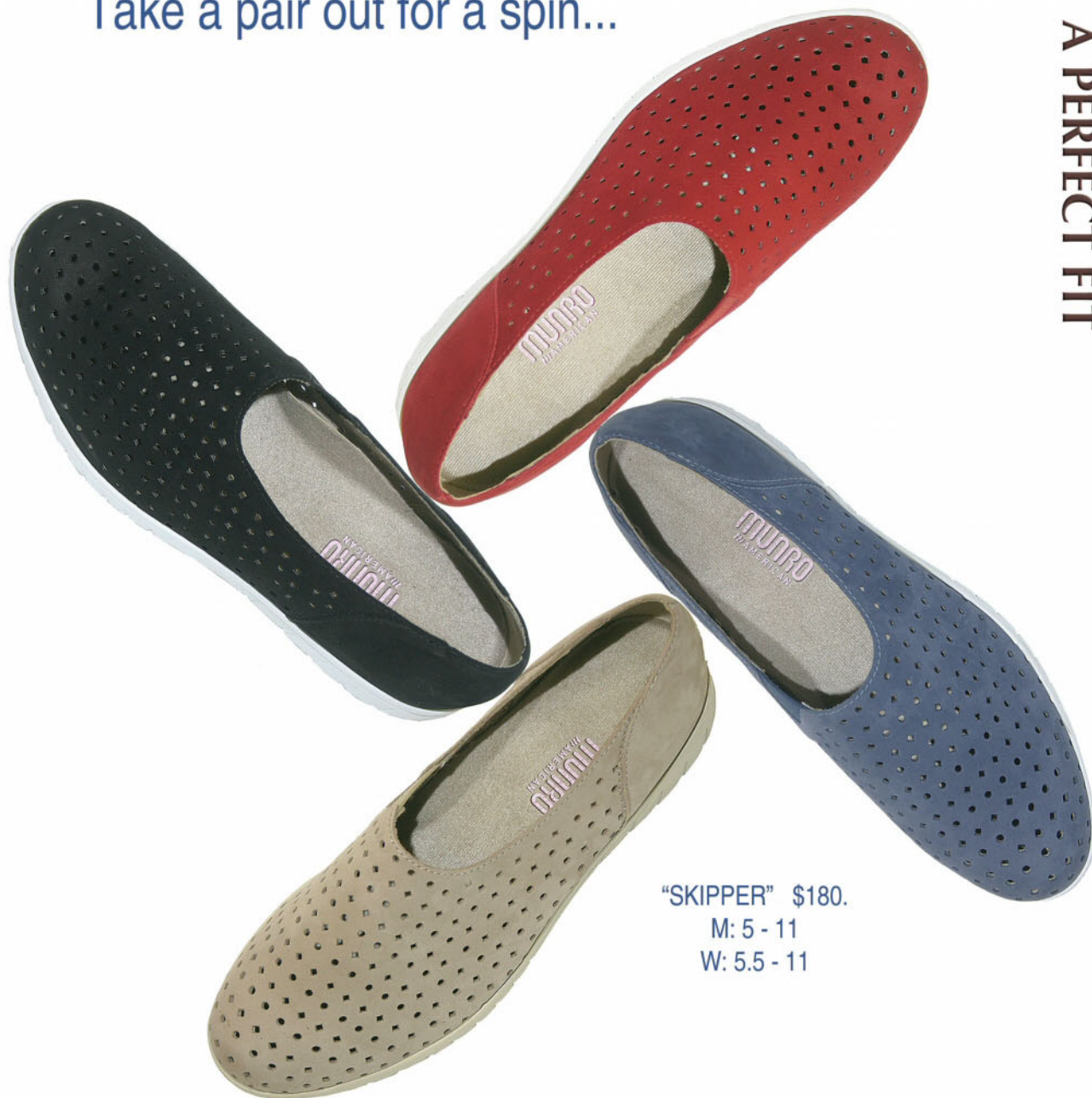
- 14 .0000001 joule
- 15 Blue shade or former Chevy
- 16 Suspect's story
- 17 Seasoned rice mixture
- 18 "Cape Fear" actor Nick
- 24 Half of ex-couple Bennifer
- 25 Duncan in Obama's cabinet
- 29 Rebuke harshly
- 31 Mill input
- 32 Bristle, in biology
- 33 Mayor before Dinkins
- 34 Apple debut of 1998
- 35 Fashion designer Jacobs
- 36 Prefix with mensch
- 37 Mandolin kin
- 38 Info on incoming flights
- 42 Votes in
- 43 "Self-Reliance" author's monogram
- 44 Being broadcast
- 45 Flair
- 46 Fished for congers
- 47 Samuel of the Supreme Court
- 48 Letter carriers' letters
- 50 "Law & Order: SVU" rapper turned actor
- 52 Color close to turquoise
- 53 Range-roaming herd of song
- 54 City-issued bond, briefly
- 56 Neighborhood w. of the Bowery
- 60 Does penance
- 62 Go by sloop
- 63 Dawn goddess
- 65 Negatively charged particle
- 66 Lifeless
- 67 D.C. ball team, for short
- 68 Parenthetical line
- 69 Societal troubles
- 70 Comedian Chappelle
- 71 Visit with a CPA, say
- 76 Real
- 78 Don't just seem
- 79 City near Florence
- 80 Food thickener
- 81 Part of kWh
- 82 Tiny amount
- 83 Soon, poetically
- 85 Instrument played by a Marx
- 86 "The Time Machine" race
- 87 Lead-in to horn or string
- 92 Pivots
- 94 Did a Salon job
- 95 Diminutive suffix
- 96 New Age guru Deepak \_\_\_
- 98 Cried like a kitten
- 99 Valuable violin
- 100 Congo's name, for a time
- 101 Colleague of Siskel and Roeper
- 102 Spicy Louisianian cuisine
- 103 Justice Kagan
- 104 McClanahan of "Maude"
- 105 \_\_\_ - Sketch (drawing toy)
- 109 Ear-related
- 110 Spanish surrealist Joan
- 111 Profess
- 112 Promgoer, typically
- 114 Song syllable
- 115 Half of a bray
- 116 Social reformer Dorothea
- 117 Ivy Leaguer nickname

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# THE APPROVAL MATRIX

Our deliberately oversimplified guide to who falls where on our taste hierarchies.

## HIGHBROW

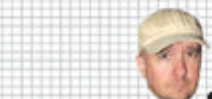


The New York State budget doesn't include a raise in the minimum wage but does include a tax break for **yacht buyers**.



The Met Museum sold *Portrait of a Young Girl* in 2013, thinking it **wasn't a Rubens**—but now it turns out it is.

Cooper Union considering an **"overload charge"** for students who take more than 19.5 hours of credits.



Because they describe **gang rape** (which he describes as "exhaustingly unpleasant"), Stephen Merritt knocks two contenders for the *Dallas Morning News*' annual Tournament of Books ...



... Which Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* **deservedly** wins.



Alex Da Corte's **haunted** decorator show house at Luxembourg & Dayan gallery.



Lisa Batiashvili and Paul Lewis's violin-and-piano recital at Alice Tully Hall was a **quiet marvel**.

Tracee Chimo **lands and sticks** four different characters in *The Heidi Chronicles*.

"Basquiat: The **Unknown Notebooks**" at the Brooklyn Museum.

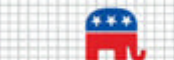


Robert Menendez is indicted for getting by with a little **too much** help from his friends.



Someone hired a PI to **investigate the prof** who criticized the treatment of migrant workers building NYU's Abu Dhabi campus and the *Times* reporter who wrote about it.

The preemptive **Twitter inquisition** of Trevor Noah.



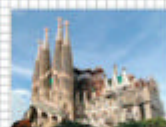
Until Jeb's flip-flop, **not a single** Republican presidential contender opposed the Indiana "religious freedom" law ...

Carey Mulligan is **rivetingly**, radically transparent in David Hare's *Skylight*.



The **crazy-ambitious** ReThinkNYC proposal to expand La Guardia by subsuming Rikers Island.

Artist Mac Premo's skateboards made of **garbage** for a World Wildlife Fund fund-raiser.



Thanks to 3-D printing, Gaudi's Sagrada Familia should be finally **completed** by 2026.

## DESPICABLE

If the developers of a 915-foot-tall Long Island City apartment tower start building by summer, they will qualify for tax breaks without having to include **affordable housing**.

Pharrell is adorable and all, but why does he keep dressing like he's a bellhop from the **Grand Budapest Hotel**?



The century-old Caffè Dante damned by the **trendy** small-plate-restaurant inferno.

*Looking*, HBO's **low-key** gay show that refused to exploit gay men, is canceled.



What kind of **crackhead** show is *Better Call Saul*?

Actually, we were kind of hoping that things might **work out** better in Alexandria on *The Walking Dead*.



Are you **stoned enough** to buy White Castle sneakers?



The Atlanta Falcons were caught piping **crowd noise** into the Georgia Dome over the past two seasons.



A **jury-rigged** gas-siphoning plan may have destroyed half a city block in the East Village ...

... Meanwhile, it could cost **\$26 billion** to replace all the old gas mains in NYC.

The Cherry Grove hotel on Fire Island **burned** down ...



... Welcome back, **Littlefinger**.

Jay Z's new (and very **expensive**) hi-fi streaming service, Tidal.



Justice at last! McDonald's is not only raising wages but testing ending the arbitrary 10:30 **breakfast cutoff**.



Hey, **Cumberbitches!** You can buy an Enigma machine at the April 13 auction at Bonhams New York (est. \$140,000 to \$180,000).



Janelle Monáe's "Yoga" should inspire everyone to downward-facing **doggy style**.

Future's "Fuck Up Some Commas" video is how kids should be taught grammar and the value of **money and hard work**.



Rihanna, **furry** leprechaun (and Jimmy Kimmel tormentor).

## BRILLIANT

## LOWBROW

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